

# Backwoods



# Home magazine

*practical ideas for self reliant living*

May/June 1998

No 51

\$3.95 US

\$5.50 Canada

## 11 "making a living" ideas

*Make money selling books  
Self publishing for profit  
Solar oven casseroles  
Build a portable forge  
Grow elephant garlic  
Sell farm produce*



## If you just love those books, here's how to make \$ with them

*By Mary Kenyon*

**D**o you love books? Do you enjoy hunting for the treasures amongst stacks of books at auctions, thrift stores, or library book sales? Want a business you can run from your home? Then the book business might be just what you're looking for.

Our home business selling books has been flourishing since the closing of our used bookstore in November 1997. Eight shelves of books line our living-room and office walls, alongside the three that contain our personal collection and home-schooling books. As homeschoolers and strong believers in learning from "real" books versus textbooks, we are perfectly content being surrounded by our product. While our home business venture started out as part of a small business that was pared down to come home, this type of business would work for anyone with a little book knowledge, time for book-hunting, and a good customer base.

The majority of our targeted customers are homeschoolers, though we do deal with a few collectors, other book-dealers, and some back-woods types who are always searching for out-of-print books on gardening, building homes, raising small livestock, canning, and similar topics. I know book dealers who specialize in certain topics, and the same could be done in a home business, especially for someone hooked up on the internet for selling, which we are not.

### Target your market

To get started in a home business selling books, you must decide who your customers are. We sell to homeschoolers because we are homeschoolers and we know what

homeschoolers are looking for. As we are learning more about collectible juvenile books, we could feasibly branch out and sell to juvenile book collectors. At this point, however, I prefer to sell to families who are using these books for reading enjoyment, not shelving them just to own a complete collection. We know one bookseller who deals only with juvenile literature on the internet, and her prices have risen beyond the budgets of most homeschoolers we deal with. She has also gotten so busy and involved in her book business she put her own homeschooled children back in school so she would have more time for the business.

Are you a self-sufficient type who can spot a Rodale book on gardening halfway across the room at a library sale? Target this population and advertise in magazines or newsletters written for the back-to-nature crowd. Love history? What about history buffs who can't get enough pre-

revisionist history books? Homeschoolers generally fall into this category too, which is why we can always sell the old history texts we unearth at auctions. Recently we profited \$20 on a children's history book we bought for 50 cents at a thrift store. With beautiful pictures and stories, it was well worth the \$20.50 we charged a special customer who is always searching for this type of book. Are you more into the collectible books, looking for special and first editions, and learning about current trends and values? Your customer base could be collectors, and ads could be run in collector's magazines.

### Collecting inventory

Once you've decided your target customers, it is time to start collecting your initial inventory. Maybe your own library can be a starting point. I am just now, after three years, rebuilding our personal library, adding books we once owned or always wanted to own, after selling one-half our collection initially to help get our business going. Call local libraries to see when they will be having





booksales, and attend every one within at least a 50-mile radius, searching for the type of books you want to sell. Prices are generally in the 50-cents to \$1 range, and not all the books are ex-library (with markings that decrease their value). Auctions are another boon to the book-hunter. Twice we have bought an entire hayrack full of boxes of books for only \$1. Yes, we ended up with a lot of worthless junk, but our initial investment netted some real gems, including an original McGuffey's reader and Ray's Arithmetic.

Be aware, however, that when books are mentioned individually in the auction ads, you may be competing with book dealers who will be willing to pay \$100 for one book. Even when this happens, you may end up with boxes of beat-up books that can still be sold as reading copies if they are highly collectible authors or illustrators.

Thrift stores or stores that depend on donations for their stock are another great source for books. Hidden amongst the shelves of old book-club books and Reader's Digest Condensed books (virtually worthless to any book dealer) you can find beautiful out-of-print children's books or a collection of beautifully illustrated Bible stories for a client who wants such things.

Other book dealers can be a source of inventory, too, especially if they are dealing with a different clientele than you. I have found nice ex-library copies of books my customers want at bookstores for as little as \$1, simply because they don't deal with ex-library as a rule, or the majority of their clients aren't interested in general juvenile literature from the 1950s, while mine are. I have many customers who will pay \$3 for a nice-looking copy of a book they read as a child that they want to own for their own children.

During your book searches, don't turn away from good copies of books that you won't personally be dealing with. For instance, when I see

beautiful art books in slipcases at thrift stores for \$1, I buy them up even if I personally don't sell them. Why? Because I know a bookstore that gives me \$5 in credit for each one I bring in. I have gotten over \$500 in credit at one particular store where I know what the owner is looking for. I use that credit, which easily equals five times the investment I put into it, and purchase books at his store that I know will sell on my list. By choosing carefully, my initial investment of \$20 gets me \$100 worth of their books which I can sell for \$150—an end profit of \$130.

When you have your initial inventory of at least 300-500 books, you need to make up a list of what you are selling. I number my books by category, ie, C1, A1, E1 for Children's, Adult's, and Educational), and I add and delete these numbers as books sell and as I add more onto the list.

I have seen many lists that are not coded but simply list the titles and authors of books available, sometimes dividing by author or subject.

I started my list with approximately 500 books total, and in three year's time it has grown to include almost 2000 books, the majority being children's and educational. I have two to three pages of back issues of highly-sought after back issues of magazines which changes quickly. You could feasibly do this list on a typewriter, but with the amount of books I have, it is nice to use a computer and make the print smaller so I can get more on each page. And updating lists is a breeze with a computer, deleting titles that sell and adding a new title in its place. This is more appealing than crossing items out as they sell.

## **Watch printing costs**

Sending out your booklist to prospective customers can be expensive. The cost of printing your lists can quickly eat up profits, so compare prices. I have paid as little as

2-cents a sheet but now my 24-page, double-sided list is costing closer to \$2 each to print and another \$1.50 to mail. I now ask for \$2 for prospective customers to receive a list, and regular customers are good about sending another \$1—or 4 stamps—to help out so they can continue getting lists.

## **Advertising essential**

Once you have your list, you need to advertise. Name your business, and, if you expect a lot of mail or want to look more business-like, rent a post office box. Working on a small budget, I searched for every free advertising space I could find, including review columns in various homeschooling magazines and newsletters. I also mentioned our business in every newspaper and magazine article I wrote and published, including this one. I ran a few paid ads but found personal mentions to be more beneficial in terms of eventual sales. A large proportion of people who request a list never buy, but the good repeat customers make up for them. Repeat customers are good about spreading the word, too, and at least one new customer a month comes from a satisfied regular customer.

When I get an order, I send a postcard or letter letting the customer know what is still available from their request list, how much their total is with postage added in, and let them know I will hold their books for them for 14 days. After I receive the money, I mail the books out book-rate. Approximately one out of 40 customers never pay, which is why I never delete a book from the list until it is paid for.

## **The time it takes**

Our home business entails approximately 2 days a month for traveling on our “book hunts,” and approximately 15 hours a week working on updating the list, filling orders, and packing

boxes. I know book dealers who work many more hours than this each week and many of them are also dealing over the internet, but with homeschooling, caring for young children, and writing, 15 hours is enough of a stretch for me. Our children can help with some of this, and the entire family enjoys hunting books and are learning to discern between good books and junk. We figure this in as part of their homeschooling.

Don't want to get quite this involved in selling books? You can start small by selling to people like me. Get to know your local bookstore owner. What is he looking for? If he pays highly for war and history books, keep an eye out for these at book sales. If you can get cash instead of credit, you could feasibly make \$4 or \$5 off a book you paid \$1 for. If no one else is bidding on old quality poetry and classic books at auctions, buy a box for \$1 or two, clean them up, and try selling them to a book dealer that sells this type of book.

Personally, I am always looking for certain types of books and will pay cash for them. Because I sell ex-library books but am unable to attend every library book sale in the state (though I'd like to), someone could purchase all the Lois Lenski's, Landmarks, and Childhood of Famous Americans series books at 50-cents a piece and sell them to me for \$1 to \$4 each, profiting nicely.

Don't just buy up books, hoping someone would like them and give you cash for them, but find out what is being sought after. Maybe you already attend the sales for books for yourself but could spend a few more minutes searching for someone else, and pay for your books in the process.

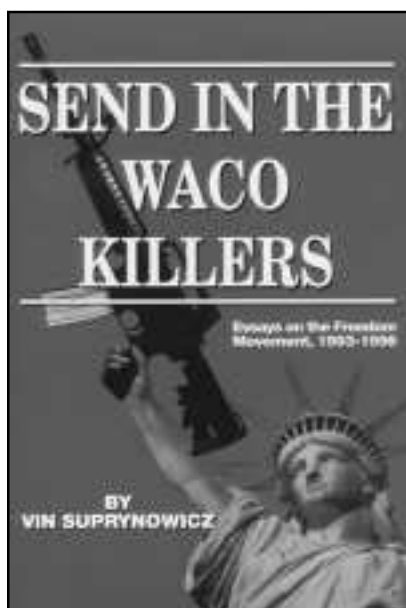
How much can you expect to make in the book business? Of course, it depends on what kind of books you are dealing with, and how many people you can reach. Dealers on the internet can command higher prices, and dealers who sell to collectors can get more for their books, but the condition of the books is much more important than if you are dealing with

customers who are just looking for good reading copies. Because we are constantly adding to our inventory, some months we only see a small profit of a couple hundred dollars. We've built up enough inventory that we could feasibly sell from our current list for months with new customers, but at this point 85% of our monthly sales are to regular customers so it is important to constantly add new stock to the list and to locate certain books we know these customers are interested in. If we were actively reaching out for new customers, our profits would increase exponentially. Selling books can be a nice second income and will always pay for itself as long as you know your market.

So, what are you waiting for, book-lovers? Get hunting and make some money off a product you love and believe in. The only thing you've got to lose is some space in your house.

(To request a list of the Kenyon's books send \$2 to Mary Kenyon, Once Upon a Time Family Books, P.O. Box 296, Manchester, IA 52057) Δ

## SEND IN THE WACO KILLERS



Three times the International Society of Newspaper Editors has included Vin Suprynowicz in their list of the 12 top weekly editorial writers in North America. For years his shoot-from-the-hip style has opened the eyes of thousands to government abuse of our liberties. In this book, Send in the Waco Killers, he blends material taken from his syndicated column with new commentary to give the reader a detailed, reporter's-eye-view of how the rights and freedoms of Americans are being subverted.

He uses factual accounts from the daily news to show how the Feds use the drug war, the public schools, jury rights, property rights, the IRS, gun control, and anti-militia hysteria to increase its power and control over us. He details how agents of the ATF and FBI have routinely lied, how they use paid informants to infiltrate Constitutionally-protected militia groups, then fabricate evidence to get arrests and discredit them.

Had he lived 225 years ago he'd have written a book to detail how King George III and Parliament have tried to enslave us but, sadly, this book is about how our government today is depriving us of our freedoms and ruining the lives of thousands without changing even one word of our Constitution.

If you read no other book this year, read Send in the Waco Killers. Just keep your blood pressure medication handy. 506 pages, trade paperback, \$21.95 + \$3 S&H.

**Only \$24.95 (includes P&H)**

**1-800-835-2418**

# The emu and ostrich craze — Why won't the big birds fly?

By Vern Modeland

Remember all the hoopla about the imminent boom in the ostrich and emu markets about five years ago, and how the big birds were going to make a lot of enterprising people rich, and how we all should jump on the bandwagon to get our share of the loot? I wrote an article for *Backwoods Home Magazine* on the subject in late 1993 titled “Ostriches and emus—backwoods bonanza or feathered pyramid?” Well, the verdict is just about in, and the “big bird craze” has taken on all the appearance of a feathered pyramid.

At the peak of the craze, Ostrich and emu meat sold for up to \$20 a pound at retail. Feathers from the big birds brought \$70 to \$80 a pound. A tanned hide from a mature bird could net as much as \$462. Emu oil was being turned into cosmetic products by a few entrepreneurs who were selling it for as much as \$25 for two ounces. Non-fertile eggs even had a market. Artists and craftspeople bought the big eggs to carve and decorate, paying up to \$8-\$10 each.

Five years ago the promoters of the “big bird craze” promised a lot. And as a “breeders market” developed, it took a lot of money to play. In a market overheated by high-rolling investors and opportunists, ostrich and emu eggs fetched \$1500 each, chicks commanded prices as high as \$4000 to \$5000 each, mature birds routinely sold for \$25,000 to \$30,000. At least one supplier contacted for my previous article—Southwind Ostrich Ranch

in Indiana—wanted \$65,000 to \$70,000 a pair for breeder birds.

At the beginning of the craze, everything sounded almost too good to be true: Ostriches grow to slaughter size in 10-14 months, producing an aver-



*The emu is a cute bird, sort of, but it has not turned into the pot of gold many entrepreneurs had hoped.*

age 70 pounds of de-boned meat and 14 square feet of hide for tanning. Emus are generally marketed at 12-18 months of age, yielding an average 25-30 pounds of meat, 15-20 pounds of fat from their backs for rendering into oil, and 7-8 square feet of hide.

It was claimed that as many as 100 of the hearty and adaptable big birds could be raised on as few as two to five acres in almost any part of the

United States. It all sounded attractive to homesteaders looking for ways to make money, even get rich.

So what happened? Are there ratites (the family name for ostriches, emus, and rheas) running around on homesteads in your area? Do you find the meat on sale at the local grocery, or featured at the crossroads restaurant? Are those “Saturday Night” boots from Tony Lama and Dan Post being made from American grown ostrich or emu hides? Are the exotic oils from the birds at your local cosmetic counters?

The answer is almost always no, but it's not all bad news for would-be ostrich and emu raisers. In fact, now that the frenzy has been replaced by hard reality, small-scale ratite raising today might be worth another look because the inflated prices of the early 90s are a thing of the past, while marketplace prices generally have not fallen as far.

## Emu farmers — Susan and John Paul

*Backwoods Home* profiled Susan Thompson and John Paul Swearengen in its 1993 article. Susan first heard about ratites at a presentation by the American Emu Association. She and J. P. scratched up \$9000 to buy a pair of breeding-age emus. They built shelters inside a couple of high and sturdily-fenced paddocks right behind the house on their few acres near Huntsville, Arkansas, and they invested in an expensive 120-egg incubator.

Susan dreamed of making \$60,000 that first year, quitting her day job, and spending more time with her son and hobbies. And she did, managing to homeschool her son for the next two years while the breeder ratite market still blew hot. But she had to go back to work when prices plummeted.

Today, Susan is at home full-time again and once more enthusiastic

about emus. But like most emu raisers, Susan would rather talk about the market potential for emu oil. They package and sell that too, under their own brand name of Swearengin Farms Emu Oil.

Susan explains: "After the birds are processed (in Missouri), the fat is frozen. Then I drive it to Texas where they render and refine it for me. Then we bottle it in various sizes."

The oil is being bought by individuals who take it as a dietary supplement, who spread it on aching limbs or scars or burns, who think it has eased the pain and swelling of their arthritis, or who swear it has brought improvement for various other internal and external ailments.

Emu oil is also said to be good for treating ailing livestock, especially horses, where it is applied to treat muscular and skin ailments or the scars of surgery or trauma.

So far, the health claims lack any official medical endorsement although research is said to be underway in Canada, Australia, and at several U.S. universities.

Some emu raisers claim that Food and Drug Administration (FDA) action is pending for various emu oil products, thus validating claims the oil is bacteriostatic, hypoallergenic, and non-comedogenic, i.e., will not clog pores. The FDA says it has not approved any products that contain emu oil.

There is also research going on as to the oil's efficacy in treating cancer, Susan says hopefully. "Someplace in Oklahoma."

## Emu meat

There are a hundred birds out back of the Swearengin's house these days. Added pens have filled an otherwise unusable rocky hillside where emus cluster beneath the oaks while growing up. The Swearengins are now raising birds mostly for processing and are working hard to expand meat sales

to wholesalers and feed lots, of which there are now two within a day's haul.

The Swearengins sell emu steaks and hamburger direct to restaurants in Huntsville and Fayetteville, Arkansas.

Susan recently bought into a company based in Las Vegas that she hopes will become a big emu meat outlet. Her decision was based on meeting Ray Pleva, who has appeared on the Oprah Winfrey TV show and CNN with his value-added food product called Plevalean.

Plevalean is ground beef mixed with cherries. Pleva claims to have generated over \$100 million in business for cherry and beef producers through combining their products. At the 1997 national convention of emu growers, he was quoted as saying, "We're going to open up new doors for the emu industry that you never had before."

As a simple test, *Backwoods Home Magazine* publisher Dave Duffy obtained some emu meat from a



*Emu skin care and dietary supplements have no government approval, but industry spokespersons say that products using emu oil are a growing market. The question is: When will it grow enough to bring in some serious money?*

neighbor, Paul Luckey, who said he was given a grown emu for free because the previous owner couldn't afford to feed his birds.

Duffy said Luckey slaughtered the bird after spending \$30 on special emu pellet food during a two-month period—a feed bill Luckey considered too high.

Duffy's wife, Ilene, sauteed celery, onion, and mushrooms while she fried emu steaks separately in olive oil. Then she combined the vegetables with the meat and added tomato sauce and stewed tomatoes along with seasonings and let it simmer for about two hours. She often makes chicken in this manner and it comes out moist and delicious. But Duffy said the resulting emu dish was "dry and fairly tasteless."

Luckey, a former beef rancher, said he cooked his emu steak in a skillet as he normally would cook a good beef steak. He also did not care for the taste of the meat.

## Emu oil market?

Emu raisers have both big dreams and some fear of quantities of emu oil suddenly being in demand by cosmetic and pharmaceutical companies. The catch is that America's emerging emu flock isn't yet large enough to supply any big or long-term demand for oil, Swearengin says, while at the same time the American Emu Association extols celebrity endorsement of a line of skin care products.

The couple has learned to make their own sales brochures to support and promote their products, and they are regularly searching for new and volume purchasers for their emus and emu products.

"I sold some chicks for about \$11,000 a pair that first year," Susan recalls a bit wistfully. "Right now the same chicks are going for about \$50 a pair. At \$50 I can make money on a three month old bird."



## **Ostrich farmers — Victor and Sharon Just**

While Susan and J.P. Swearingin were taking their first tentative steps as emu breeders, Victor and Sharon Just had started looking for ostriches. The Justs chose the larger, more aggressive ostriches over emus for a single reason, according to Sharon. It was the bird's laying cycle.

"Emus lay their eggs during the winter months, normally between November and March. Ostriches lay in the summer."

"We read, we called people, and we drove around to meet others," Sharon recalls. "You need to talk to people who are buying birds, to see what the prices are, and if they are even buying. Prices change. It's just like beef and pork."

"The national associations are where I buy my literature to give people. They have a lot of information, but that wouldn't be the only place I would look."

After studying what they learned, the Justs bought a pair of ostriches to breed in 1993. The next year, they bought two more breeders. And when the females began laying eggs (which happens at an average age of 30-36 months), the Justs bought an incubator and built their own hatching facilities.

Today, the Justs' Rocky Top Ostrich Farm has 10 birds for breeding. Statistically, ostriches can live 70 years, and females can lay 20 to 100 eggs a year and go on laying for as many as 40 years. Theirs produced a total of 100 chicks in 1997. The year before there were 70 to sell. The first major sale by the Justs was 20 female and 10 male year-old birds to a rancher in Indiana. The remainder of that first hatch went to slaughter and, as processed meat, on to consumers that the Justs pretty much also had to unearth by themselves.

The Justs sell ostrich meat cuts to a specialty restaurant in Harrison, Arkansas, about 40 miles away, and to

another cafe in Mountain Home, about 25 miles in the other direction. Rocky Top ostrich meat also goes to a couple of area grocery stores and to a growing list of individuals who have been attracted by health claims for ratite meat and the fact that, for the most part, the Justs' birds are raised medicine and supplement-free.

Total ostrich sales by Rocky Top Ostrich Farm in 1997 just about paid the feed bill. Feed from major companies, ones that have nutritionists to create the proper blends, can cost \$20 to \$25 a ton, and the birds each eat around five pounds a day when mature.

The Justs also work hard at inventing homespun promotions. This past year, they had an exhibit at their county fair and another at a popular regional event, the annual Turkey Trot Festival in Yellville, Arkansas. They offered tasting samples of such things as ostrich sausage, jerky, and seasoned Ostrich Sticks—all prepared by the same USDA-approved meat processor that the Swearingins employ at Verona, Missouri.

While the USDA has approved voluntary inspection of ratite meat, there is no mandatory inspection for ostrich or emu meat required at present.

### **Ex-emu farmer Jim Cook**

Jim Cook is a northern California speciality livestockman who has had long experience with ratite type birds. He feels the industry would not have had such explosive growth, then suffered what he refers to as "a total meltdown," if opportunists and inadequately prepared individuals had stayed out of the market.



*This is one of the male breeder birds at Rocky Top Ostrich Farm in Arkansas. Owners Sharon and Victor Just have 100 birds kept in 3 pens on 5 of the 14 acres they own.*

"I have watched or been involved in exotic livestock for a number of years" said Cook, who recalled "the Shetland pony craze in the 50s when I was just a kid."

"The prices plummeted from \$5,000 to \$500 for a stud, and geldings went virtually for free. Lots of people have used animals in their get-rich-quick attempts—llamas, pot-bellied pigs, hedgehogs, wild cat hybrids, ferrets, as well as ostriches, emus, and rheas. I have owned some of the above and traded in some and even made money with some."

"I have emus for pets still, which is why I bought them in the first place. And I feel that a great disservice was done by the promoters of the 'breeder craze' to the exotic livestock industry. I would cheerfully kick them in their emus for making the market crazy. Some people did get rich, but a lot

more seem to have invested in a losing proposition.”

There’s still some potential, said Cook, but developing an emu or ostrich operation takes a lot of work, lots of thought, and the realization that the profits may not be any better than any other agricultural endeavor.

Although he’s out of the commercial ratite business, Cook still raises Fallow deer and keeps a full-time job that requires a daily commute of about 100 miles. As a hobby, he raises exotic chickens and usually monopolizes the blue ribbons at the local county fair. The deer are an English import and are legally raised as a year-round venison source for discriminating diners.



*Sturdy fences keep flightless emu birds home on Swarengin Farms in Arkansas. Susan Thompson and John Paul Swarengin own 100 emus.*

“I know how hard it is to get even a lean, healthy meat into restaurants and grocery stores,” he said, expressing empathy for those who have assumed the same responsibility.

Speaking of his early emu experience, he said the first people who came to buy from him had no exotic animal experience and very little farming experience of any kind.

“But they kept talking about how much money they would make. Now I would be the first to admit that people can learn how to farm, but it helps having some concept of how much work might be involved.”

“Farming is farming and it is not easy no matter how you shake it. If you aim at getting rich you stand a good chance of not. Most of the people talking to me were convinced that someone else, whomever that may be, would build the slaughter market. With a species that produces up to 30 young per female each year, clearly the breeder market would be saturated in a hurry.”

He referred to the potbellied pigs and the lack of an end user market, noting that something other than a meat market would be necessary for profitable operation.

“Emus are a bad choice for a strictly meat animal. They breed only in pairs, which is much more expensive than ostriches or rheas which will breed in flocks like poultry.

“Without a market place, such as auction houses like those for cattle, sheep, and hogs, you have to depend on a processor who has invested in marketing the birds, a processor of the type poultry growers seek. Or small processors like those with which meat goat breeders deal. Otherwise you have to process and market yourself.

“I know that developing and maintaining a market is a very difficult proposition because that’s what I have to do with the Fallow deer I raise. I have a great deal of respect and admiration for those breeders who are making the switch from breeding to meat processing.”

## **Keep the day job**

The Justs are pragmatic about things. Sharon said, “We’re still at the beginning; we need to make a market. We’d like to be selling to commercial slaughterers. We feel the wholesale market will come.”

But until it does, she continues to stay with her health care career. She is a radiologic technician for a regional

hospital. Vic also holds on to a day job too.

## **National associations**

The American Ostrich Association (AOA) is striving for standards for flock health and handling and in inspection of the meat and promotion and development of ostrich markets. Formed in 1987, AOA claimed peak membership in 1993 of almost 4,000. Today it is about 1500. Emphasis in 1993 was largely on what was to come, not what was at hand. Sources where quoting potential gross income of \$30,000 per bird per year, including egg production and the meat, feathers, hides and specialty products. With the shift from breeder to consumer market, it is impossible to compare that price with today’s, says AOA’s Jan Gary.

The American Emu Association’s (AEA) mission parallels that of the AOA, with an additional emphasis on establishing some standards for emu oil processing and purity. Founded in 1989, it tripled its size in the banner year 1993, signing up 13 percent of 3,000 members in just 45 days. But only about 300 of the association’s membership, today said to total 1600, were at its 1997 convention in St. Louis.

The drop in AEA membership, Swarengin says, reflects people who were buying and selling birds for quick return. Today, family and other smaller operations form the backbone of affiliations, especially among those emu raisers speculating that the oil rendered from emus will become the big money maker in the long run.

Active as the secretary of her own state’s emu association, Susan Swarengin faults people who are, as she says, “sitting back and waiting for somebody else to do it.”

## **History’s lessons**

The history of the pond-raised catfish industry may hold some lessons



for anyone looking to put money or energy into ostriches or emus. It was some 30 years before production, marketing, and processing were all in place for catfish raisers to meet all the challenges of supply and demand and reach the share of the food market they have today.

And chicken producers appear none too excited about ostriches or emus pushing poultry out of the meat case. According to executive Ed Nicholson of Tyson Foods, which is the nation's largest poultry producer: "They're going to have to meet both production and marketing challenges—that is create demand on a mass scale, then meet that demand with a product that's priced competitively with all meat proteins on the market."

Jd Belanger, who publishes *Countryside & Small Stock Journal* magazine, has made a point worth adding. He observes that rabbit producers have been promising a breakthrough in U.S. rabbit meat consumption "any minute now." That first was reported in *Countryside* in 1917.

An International Ostrich Association has formed in the Netherlands over this past winter to support global promotion and consumer acceptance for the ratites. At its first meeting, a Dutch ostrich farmer reflected that the total world production of ostrich meat today, which is triple what it was in 1993, still no more than equals the amount of pork slaughtered in a single day.

## For more information

- The Center for Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas. This helpful resource to anyone looking at a new venture has packets of information and a specialist to talk to. Free. ATTRA, Box 3657, Fayetteville, AR, 72702. Phone: 1-800-346-9140. Web site: <http://www.attra.org>.
- American Ostrich Association, 3950 Fossil Creek Blvd., Suite 200, Ft. Worth, TX, 76137. (817) 232-1200. E-mail



*Ostriches are segregated by general age in one of three pens at Rocky Top Ostrich Farm. These are production birds.*

- (aoa@flash.net). Web site: <http://www.ostriches.org>.
- American Emu Association, P.O. Box 8174, Dallas, TX, 75205. (214) 559-2321. E-mail: [amemuasn@nkn.net](mailto:amemuasn@nkn.net). Web site: <http://www.pier37.com/aea/>.
- State University Extension services and the Small Business Administration are other sources.

### Publications:

- Emu Today & Tomorrow, P.O. Box 7, Nardin, OK, 74646. (405) 628-2933. 12 issues \$25. Special report; "Emu Oil: Reexamining a Natural Remedy" \$24.95. E-mail: [emutoday@aol.com](mailto:emutoday@aol.com).
- The Ostrich News, P.O. Box 860, 518 C Street, Cache, OK 73527. (405) 429-3765. 12 issues \$48. E-mail: [staff@ostrichnews.com](mailto:staff@ostrichnews.com).

Here's a random sampling of information sources we found on-line, searching with Yahoo, Infoseek, and HotBot:

- [http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/AFSIC\\_pugs/srb9706](http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/AFSIC_pugs/srb9706)
- <http://sunsite.unc.edu/farming-connection/>

- [http://envirolink.org/arrs/marc/activist/1\\_ostrich](http://envirolink.org/arrs/marc/activist/1_ostrich)
- <http://cust2.iamerica.net/emuranch>
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- <http://duke.usask.ca/~ladd/ratfarm.htm>
- <http://www.cakemagazine.com/56/kristen.htm> Δ

## Sometimes

*Sunlight dapples the steady hands  
holding the knife that sliced  
sure and sharp through the scales  
and skins, emptying the entrails  
of the fish clean and neat; a  
painless, sure slice that cut  
both deep and true with ease.*

*Sometimes life is like that.*

**Lee Ann Murphy**  
Neosho, MO

## Spousal support in a small business — it means tolerance, love, and faith in the future

*By Patrice Lewis*

**I**t sounds almost too good to be true: own your own business, spend time with your family, and set your own hours.

Well, assuming that you've started your own business at home, these are all true. But recall the old adage: Be careful what you wish for; you may get it. Like all things, owning your own business has its ups and downs.

My husband started his own wood-working craft business about five years ago, shortly after we bought our four acres in the country. Starting a business just after investing your last dollar in a mortgage, however modest, may not be the smartest move, but that's what we did. And business has grown, also modestly, through these five years, enough to enable me to quit work and stay home with our children. So how do we deal with the above-mentioned benefits?

We have two small children and an 800-square-foot home. Our "wood-shop" consists of a 10 x 14-foot unheated shed and a used converted greenhouse. This means that in winter especially, the shop moves into the house. Or, to put it another way, we live in our shop. Now, don't get me wrong. Business and earnings have improved. It's just that every time we've gotten money ahead to build that dream shop, another "blessed" event seems to occur (my husband refers to our two children as Shop One and Shop Two).

Yes, space gets tight. This has benefits: if you're not fond of housework, you can let things go to pot, and it makes little difference. However, if,

like me, you like a modicum of neatness, it can be frustrating. We have to time having friends over when we're between production runs in order to (a) have enough room to fit them in, and (b) not be humiliated at the state of the house/shop. There are several things to contend with. Dusting, for instance, is a lost cause. I learned this when I was visiting some friends. I would pick up a book from their bookshelf and automatically blow across the top of it, before realizing that they don't have the same problem we do. For years now, I've blown the dust off of any book I pick up at home, no matter how recently I've put it down. Most days, after lunch or at the end of the evening, I have to brush rump-shaped sawdust-prints from couches and chairs. It's a living.

There's the noise. Power tools (located immediately outside the house in the shed) are something our children have been exposed to literally since in utero. They can sleep through a router or planer easier than they can a creaking floorboard (as when we're sneaking to the bathroom at night).

You'd better darn well get along well with your spouse if you're going to have a home business, because, as promised, you will indeed spend a lot more time with your family. You won't be at leisure, you understand; but you learn to apply your toddler's intense interest in everything, creatively ("Here, sweetheart, why don't you sand this piece of wood for me? Okay, now can you pile these pieces of wood in the box? All right, now you can take these pieces of wood out of the box!"). This can also be handy when the infant needs care and the toddler needs attention—the spouse is right there to help. Likewise, if we have rush orders, you'd be amazed how efficient we can be with the baby in a sling across my back, the toddler sanding wood, and we adults manufacturing as fast as we can.



As for hours, you can indeed set your own. Whoopee. I can't count the number of times that we've finally tumbled into bed around midnight or one a.m. (only to waken with one or the other baby shortly thereafter) during a rush job. On the other hand, I also can't count the number of times we've slept in until the kids wake us, had a leisurely breakfast, and kicked off work around one in the afternoon. Easy living? Carefree times of plenty? Hardly. These moments of leisure mostly occur in the winter, our slow season. Understand that an utter lack of money accompanies these fantasies.

Then there are the little mysteries of life. Being so busy, I get to cleaning the bathroom only a couple of times a month. Being female, I rarely raise the toilet seat between times. I've always been disgusted by the coating of sawdust on the rim, but have never been at a loss as to its origin. However, one day my somewhat dense and especially sawdust-y husband came out of the bathroom and said, "You know that dust that shows up all the time on the toilet rim? I just figured out where it comes from!" Ah, sweet mystery of life, at last I've found you...

This same slightly dense husband (which, you understand, in no way impinges on his status as the World's Greatest) was working on some items on the living room coffee table one day, gently hammering tiny nails onto a box lid. It wasn't until half an hour later that he finished his job and left it to me to discover the dozens of small craters in the surface of the coffee table. He gets so busy and so creative that he doesn't always think about these little side effects, you see. This is where it's handy to have a toddler—we can blame it on her.

Then there's the Magic Disappearing Kitchen Implements: missing measuring cups, measuring spoons, double boiler (fortunately a cheap one), baking pans, pie pans, coffee cups, canning jars. I drew the line at my good bread pans and told him to go buy his own.

Even though I am no longer as active in the production side of things since the kids arrived, we are good at bouncing ideas back and forth. My beloved has some trouble ascertaining whether certain product ideas will fly or not, and this appears to be an area of some strength for me. He came up with a miniature version of one of our products once, as a gag gift to a friend. I told him he'd better make dozens, because he would be besieged with orders. "Are you kidding?" he replied "Who'd want one of these?" For two years they were some of our best sellers.

On the other hand, he's had some ideas which he was **sure** would fly. Unfortunately, they generally consist of absurd investments in time, effort, and materials. He blames the short-sightedness of our customers when they don't sell.

Similarly, I've discovered it's my job to rein in and discourage certain fantasies, generally involving large and expensive power tools. "But just think how a gang saw would increase our speed!" "Well, dear, just think of the cost." "Yeah but...but..." That's why there's two of us.

I've also discovered it's my job to stroke fragile egos, and I don't mean our toddler's. Every winter, when things (including money) slow down, my beloved gets the jitters about whether we can survive or not, and maybe he should go out and get a job at the local corner store, and will we have enough money to pay the mortgage, and...

This in spite of weathering five years of slow but steady growth, through five winters, through the birth of two children (with no maternity health insurance you figure the cost), through the increasing frequency of our orders even in the slower winter months. For five years I've told him don't worry, we'll tighten our belts and pull through. That's why there's two of us.

Of course, occasionally during our busiest season, when I'm desperately

wrestling to keep the house/shop marginally livable and keep two tiny kids out of daddy's hair because he's so frantically busy, I'll look up and find him happily carving a dragon or something, impervious to the rush orders sitting on the desk. It's times like this that I'm glad my aim is so poor, since I'd hate to dent the wall above his head or waste a coffee mug.

On the other hand, it's not hard to handle those tough fifteen-second commutes, especially when the air is thick with spring apple blossoms. It's nice to be able to leave the shop and come up to the house for a cup of coffee or lunch or to share something crazy he heard on talk radio. There's always a few minutes to play with the kids. And when I get tired of the kids, I can go down to the shop, and the husband watches the children. As a result, my husband is closer to (and more competent to care for) our children than most men. In addition, he's much less stressed, even during the summer rush season. His blood pressure had dropped significantly with no change in diet and exercise once we moved here and got poor. Maybe it's the perfume of apple blossoms and sawdust.

This, then, is what it's like to Own Your Own Business. A tolerance for long hours and no money, a love for your spouse, and an utter faith that things will eventually get better. Δ

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## I grow my homestead fund by stitching “ditty bags”

By Winston Howerton

I’m a merchant mariner by trade, but when I’m on the “beach” I stay knee-deep in compost and rump-high pea pods. For more than a fair part of the year, I’m away at sea. I make a pretty fair wage, but to secure my little bit of “Heaven on Earth,” my wife and I try to make extra money when we can.

During my many years at sea, I’ve become pretty good at what’s called “marlinspike seamanship.” The term goes back over a hundred years, to a time when “ships were made of wood and men were made of iron.” It’s really nothing more than the art of knot making, rope-work, and sail repair, and it has filled an income niche that has done rather well for me.

Several years ago, I stitched a small bag together from scraps of canvas that I’d found in the “bosun’s locker.” There were always small pieces of canvas left over from jobs we did on deck, and normally they would have been thrown out so I began collecting them. I started selling the bags to my shipmates, and from the response I received I was eager to keep on

sewing. I sold quite a few bags at sea over the years and have even given several away as gifts for birthdays and holidays.

But only in the past year or so have things really taken off, ever since I started going to boating events and sailboat races. With all those big expensive boats around, people found it easy to afford my “ditty bag.” I also go to the sailboat races early and just chat about the ditty bags with people, and I sell a few right there, then take orders for them later.

I’ve sold the bags for as little as \$6 and for as much as \$18. I’ve also had pretty good luck selling the bags at flea-markets and craft shows. But those events always charge for booth space or entrance fees, so I try to avoid them when I can. I market the bag as a catch-all utility bag—good for anything from a lunch sack to shell hunting bag, or even a rubbish bin for the family car.

The canvas I use makes the bag tough enough for a stuff sack for camping or even for use as a tool kit. While I’m at sea, I keep my sewing kit and survival stuff in my original bag. It’s nine years old now and shows no sign of aging, aside from the grease and dirt stains. It’s been rumored that one of my bags is even being used as a flower pot, giving an indoor basil plant a great place to live.

Here’s how I make the bag: I cut a 6-inch circular piece of canvas to make the bottom (the original template was a large coffee can). A larger piece—19.5 inches long and 10.5 inches wide—forms the body of the bag. With heavy, marine style sail twine, I stitch the bottom piece to one of the 19.5-inch sides, forcing the bag to hold a circular shape. I then sew up the two 10.5-inch ends.

To finish the top, I fold down a flap that measures about a half inch. Into that flap, I stitch a drawstring that will enable the bag to be closed and opened. I’ve used everything from rawhide to old bootlaces to make the drawstring. So long as it will accommodate the cord-loc and looks decent, I’ll use it.

With a little patience, just about anyone can learn these basic marlinspike skills. I only use one or two simple stitches to make each bag. I do most of my stitching when I’m “off watch” during my months at sea. It beats



*Bag is held closed by cord-loc attached to drawstring.*



*Drawstring is sewn into flap after body and bottom pieces are sewn together. Pull bag rightside out.*

watching movies, and since I’ve read nearly every book on my ship my time is well spent. It takes about an hour and a half to make each bag so I don’t always make minimum wage on each one, but my homestead fund doesn’t care. It just wants cash, any and all cash.

To make my time away from home pass without getting too homesick, I try to enjoy the afternoons by sitting out on the stern of my ship. I often watch the sun slip past the mountains of the Kenai Peninsula, putting one stitch at a time into my dream of living on my own land with my family. Maybe one day I won’t have to ship any more, and I can cruise the boat shows looking for a boat of my own. But until then I’ll keep stitchin’ one bag at a time... Δ

## Perk up the cash flow by selling farm produce

By Jackie Clay

Every month we used to think the same thing—if we can just make it through this month, we'll have a little more money next month. But, somehow, next month had an uncanny way of ending up same-old.

I farm 200 acres, plus pay leases on several others, and my family and I live a self-reliant lifestyle on our homestead. But we scarcely got by until I discovered a fairly simple way of keeping cash coming in for those things we could not grow or barter for—tractor parts, new tires for the Troy-bilt, insurance for the truck, gasoline, the electric bill, and other cold, hard expenses.

But I had always grown a big garden to “put up” in the fall. With this garden I supplied my family with a large part of our food. One day, the idea just popped into my head: Why not expand the garden and sell the excess?

Once that thought entered my head, one idea led to another. I had a large home-built greenhouse in which to start my garden plants. If I reworked

the shelving and added tables, I could more than double the production capacity. With this increased production, I could sell packs of plants from my home as well as at the farmer's market and small local stores. I also realized I could raise baby veggies on a couple of acres I would set aside in our usual large house garden.

After talking with neighbors, I discovered I was not alone. There were several with the same money problems we had and they were considering the same solution. So we teamed up, each using his or her best talents and equipment. For instance, since I was the one with the greenhouse, I started their plants, too. But when the time came they were right there to help with the tedious job of transplanting thousands of plants.

Also, I had no corn planter, but another neighbor did and I had sweet corn seed, for planting, in bulk.

Next, if we were going to grow for market, we had to determine what would be best to grow. For years, I'd tried different early varieties of canning corn that would flourish in Minnesota, where we then lived, and I

chose varieties that were strong, repelled insects, and were great tasting. I put in an acre of Earlivee along with another acre of other early varieties so we would have a succession of crops ripening that we could sell

throughout the late summer and into the fall.

Tomatoes were another thing that were almost impossible to find in our northern area and growing them was a big gamble because of early frosts. But I figured we'd try them as they did great in the years when we protected them with plastic covers. So we planted a thousand tomato plants. Unfortunately, we had the wettest, coldest summer anyone could remember and the first thousand froze out the sixteenth of June. We put in a second planting and it drowned. But we planted again, on raised beds, along with some broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, carrots, onions, green and yellow wax beans, and flowers as well.

Luckily, while the other plants were drowning, the corn thrived in the rain, and did great.

We began selling after the 4th of July, and kept on until well past the first freeze in the fall. Once a little regular income was coming in I decided I really was on to something. And not only did we make money, but new friends as well, and I learned one heck of a lot along the way.

### What and where to sell

Through the years I found that markets vary from place to place. But generally, there are some things that are always in demand and sell well: bedding plants in six packs, tomatoes, cukes (particularly small pickling cukes), sweet corn, pumpkins, peppers, flowering cactus, baby “gourmet” vegetables (like carrots, onions, corn, string beans, tomatoes), potted plants in flower, cut flowers (especially glads and roses), Indian flour corns, ornamental corns (like strawberry or mini-corns).

In addition I found we could add an assortment of folksy crafts, such as



*Jackie Clay shows off her bumper crop of corn.*

grape vine wreaths, dried flowers, gourds, wood craft, birdhouses, bird feeders, weavings, stitchery, quilts, honey, soaps, etc., that would stretch the selling season from early spring through late fall with ease.

I sell just about anywhere I can. The easiest, and least labor-intensive, is selling from a small stand at home. We do that. But also, with the help of truck-gardening neighbors, we take and sell our produce at farmer's markets.

We also try to make contacts with small restaurants and general stores, taking orders and making absolutely sure we deliver what we promise. These people have become a reliable source of income.

I also sell at larger campgrounds, making six or so stops during a weekend, Friday through Sunday, and showing up at each one, at the same time, on the same day, so campers will know when to expect me. But always talk to the owner in advance—I've never been turned away—and I put up a notice in the camp's office or store, beforehand, to advise the campers that fresh organic produce will be coming. I always set up my stand in the same place, using the same truck, so people get to recognize us.

## Dealing with competition

We do have competition—other people selling the same type of produce we do both at the farmers' markets and the grocery stores in town. Yet, we found that the best location in our town was in an empty lot, owned by a farm supply store (to whom we gave lunch-munchies as rent), and right next to a big commercial chain supermarket. Not only that, but our stand was only half a block from a flea market area where southern produce was sold from two big parked trucks. How did we compete with all that in a town of 1,500? It would have been easy to become negative and chuck the whole idea. But we not only met the competition, we beat them.

## Marketing tips

I beat them because I offer the absolute freshest produce that can be found. At the peak of the season, we not only pick on the morning we go to market, we have the "crew" out picking while we sell, and they often bring a fresh truckload in twice during the day. People notice quality, believe me, and there's often a mob collected around us about the time the farm truck rolls in bringing freshly picked produce.

At the end of the day, anything that is left—if there is anything left—I trade for things I need, or I give it



*Off to market*

away to friends, or I donate it to the food bank. Trying to hold over produce, in hopes of selling it the next day will kill our edge.

With super-tasting varieties, picked fresh, we don't want to dull our customer response with less than extra great tasting produce. And it's paid off. More than one buyer has told me that they picked up some corn (or whatever) at a competitor's stand, only to find it tough and tasteless. But ours was the best they'd ever eaten. Will they be back? You darned betcha—with friends and relatives.

Keeping the produce fresh, looking fresh, takes a little work and planning. A sunshade/rain fly is necessary. Produce displayed in the sun quickly wilts, looks dead, and tastes worse.

Kept shaded with a market umbrella or blue plastic tarp, and sprinkled down with cold water or ice from time to time, the produce looks sparkly fresh all day. We make ice cubes in our freezer daily, bringing it to market in ice cream pails in a cooler. Those little diamonds of icy water on even lowly corn husks attract customers, like bees to honey. They can't help but think that if we take that good care of the produce at market, how much better care we take of it at home. (Watch the ice, as some crops, such as strawberries and cukes, will freeze in spots. Use only spritzer bottles of cold water on them.)

I always stress to our customers that our produce is organically grown and not sprayed with poison, as most other fruits and vegetables are. Even people who are not particularly organically minded appreciate this fact and become repeat customers. Likewise, we let folks know that our eggs are produced by happy hens, scratching in a yard eating bugs, not locked up in chicken "concentration camps" as commercial layers are.

Another thing that keeps people coming back is simple courtesy and above-and-beyond-the-call-of-money helpfulness. Does that little white haired lady really want a dozen ears of corn? If she only can use two ears for supper, sell her two ears. She'll be back every day, bringing her family and friends to buy from "those nice people over by the river." Does the farm wife, in the beat up truck need forty dozen ears of corn to can? I make a deal, quietly, to the side. A customer who knows I'm concerned with her family will be back.

Does someone need a box carried to the car? Want to pick up an order after work? Want me to bring in cukes tomorrow? You can bet I will. Do they want to know how to fix spaghetti squash or make zucchini bread? I carry index cards, an extra pen, and a few simple cookbooks in the front seat to share my recipes in slack moments.



Do they want to know how to grow begonias, make a raised bed or make compost? I carry copies of *Backwoods Home* and *Organic Gardening* in the truck.

Would they like to try an eggplant or ear of my corn? I give them a sample to try. I've never lost out yet.

Beats the heck out of the "gimme your money and get lost" attitude so familiar in today's markets and it brings back the buyers. I've had many marketing days where we made over \$300.

## **Tips on the stand**

When selling off the truck, the "stand" can be simply the tailgate of your pickup supplemented by card tables or it can be more elaborate. The nicest stand we ever used was a joint venture between our family, which had a good wood wagon box—but no wheels or running gear—and a neighbor who had great wooden wheels and running gear, but no box. We put the two together. It was painted green and yellow with a produce sign on the side. Talk about something that caught people's eye. We hauled the wagon to market in my sixteen foot stock trailer and it was well worth the extra effort.

When selling from the road, I always try to set up in a high-traffic area, catching people as they leave town. They can see us as they come into town, and think about stopping all the while they're shopping (often at our competitors). We're sort of like a living billboard. But, being in a high-traffic area can be hazardous. Be sure there's ample, safe parking nearby.

Color attracts people. I've found that a bright blue plastic tarp or colorful market umbrella over the main selling area not only protects the produce from the elements (and buyers from rain) but it makes us visible from a distance and attracts people. Likewise, I try to sell different colored produce, interspersed among bright flowers (both cut and potted varieties). Nothing is more boring than a truck-

load of broccoli. No one will stop. Perk it up with corn—some opened and kept fresh, cauliflower, red peppers, yellow summer squash and a few bouquets of roses, glads and zinnias, and POW! You're in business. Lacking anything else, use a red and white checkered plastic tablecloth or bright woven rug under the produce. Or use quilts and crafts of many colors placed here and there. It works wonders, especially late in the day when you're running out of variety. And keep moving your produce around, taking advantage of its color. Don't get stuck with blah blocks of plain old green.

Simple, large signs, along the road draw in buyers. Advertise the produce they want most, and display the rest prominently. Do you have extra-early tomatoes? The best corn in town? The only corn in town? Tell people.

It's best to set up a simple chalk board with prices. Some people are too shy to ask and will look around, without inquiring, then leave if there are no prices displayed. With the chalkboard, you can easily change prices—neatly—without scribbling.

Keep a good supply of boxes (scavenged from stores) and paper bags. We buy ours from small grocers to whom we also sell. We also have friends save bags for us to cut down on our expenses. But try to keep away from plastic. It detracts from the "farm" image. We did a little experimenting, wrapping some broccoli in plastic bags, leaving others plain. The plastic-wrapped broccoli sold dead last. People prefer to buy out of rustic baskets or even cardboard boxes. I often display small amounts of tomatoes, or other produce, in small woven baskets. I sell huge amounts this way and immediately refill the basket after the sale.

## **Stretching the season**

With a little advance planning, often done as winter's snows are still whistling around the windows, the

marketing season can be stretched more than one can imagine.

I start my first violas, geraniums, pansies and peppers in January and February, as well as potting up flowering cactus. And this is the time crafts can be made, such as woodwork, weaving, candles, wreaths, etc.

As the first warm days of spring roll around we can hit the market armed with bright packs of flowers, bird houses, and the very first sugar pod peas, lettuce, greens, radishes, and rhubarb on the stands. Soon, this expands into more bedding plants and vegetable packs, more salad fixings such as spinach, tiny carrots, and onions, along with maple syrup, asparagus, potted geraniums for Memorial Day, hanging baskets, and home crafts.

As the tourist season gets under way, we get busy with broccoli, peas, beans, more onions, baby beets, the first cukes, summer squash, mint, herbs, strawberries, blueberries, potted plants, and more crafts and folk art.

Later in the summer our truck is loaded with corn, tomatoes, strawberries, raspberries, potatoes, beets, apples, and more from our successive plantings.

Fall brings relief from the rush, but we still can't rest. There are still potatoes, apples, squash, pumpkins, cauliflower, cabbage, jellies, pickles and jams canned at home, as well as dried bouquets of strawflowers, statice, yarrow, baby's breath, wreaths of everlastings, and the first bird feeders.

Even winter can bring a few nice days to market pre-holiday wreaths made from grapevines, everlastings, willow, and balsam boughs decorated simply. We also sell dried bouquets, more bird feeders, little bags of grain for bird feeding and tied with bright calico bows, jellies, pickles, soaps, and other home crafts, all suitable for Christmas gifts.

The possibilities are limitless and have turned out to be so much fun that it has kept me busy just figuring out what we'll try next year. Δ

## Remembering “the good life”

By Melissa Yell

As newlyweds, my husband Mike and I thought we lived the good life: established careers, ambition, and a few investments. One of our investments was a remote, dilapidated house on 10 acres we purchased for \$14,000 to remodel and sell for profit (a hobby we enjoyed before “capital gains taxes” got the better of us).

Mike decided to go to college full-time and, being young and idealistic, we sold the Harley and our home for money to live on until he completed college. With a wonderful two-year old son named Michael that I adored, there was no way I was willing to go back into the workplace just yet. Given those circumstances, we boldly went where few men have gone before: the land of voluntary poverty.

At first we lived in the style we were accustomed to, until we realized how quickly our funds were disappearing. With all spending and no income, that seems to happen. We resolved to get by on just the basics, paying only the tax man, utilities, and a few necessities.

Mike quickly sharpened his skills on hunting squirrel’s, rabbits, quail, and deer. My parents seemed to mention at just the right times when the fish were biting at the lake they live on. Mike, Michael, and I caught and ate the best-tasting spring-fed bluegills, catfish, and crappies. I studied wild edibles from library books and spent many hours with Michael gathering fiddleheads, cattails, watercress (cow slips), wild blackberries, raspberries, blueberries, grapes, strawberries, pears, apples, asparagus, choke cherries and May apples for jelly, as well as morels, puff balls, stumpies, and coral mushrooms.

We also raised chickens, turkeys, Guineas, geese, and pigs. The birds we bought inexpensively when we could find them. The pigs were given to us by a neighboring pig farmer because they were sickly runts that were going to be destroyed.

The first pig he gave us weighed only five pounds. We named him Wilber. He lived in a dog house in our laundry room and was a happy pig, thriving on running around in the house, squealing with delight, and playing ball with Michael. At about 25 pounds, he went to live outside when we received four more pigs (each only three to four pounds) that we named Eenie, Meenie, Miney, and Mo. They were all sick with diarrhea and could barely stand. Their ribs could easily be counted. I read books on caring for pigs, bought over-the-counter medicine, and cured all except Miney, who was too far gone. We thoroughly enjoyed raising all the animals.

We felt fortunate when another neighbor (by “neighbor” I mean two miles away) let us scavenge his garden before the frost hit, and I promptly learned how to can tomatoes and hot peppers. I also gathered as many zucchini recipes as possible, and we feasted on zucchini casseroles, breads, cookies, and quiches.

My grandmother, Grandma P-Nut, let me clean her and Grandpa Wally’s house every couple of weeks to earn a little extra money. What I *truly* earned was an education in “Depression era economics.” She taught me many of the survival tricks she learned while raising her family during the Depression, all based on the philosophy “make do, make over, or do without.”

For those two years, Christmas gifts were always hand-made. Crocheted doilies, Barbie doll clothes, and placemats were popular, and woven cattail leaves make beautiful mats to decorate with dried flowers for wall hangings. To this day, every cattail mat I gave away is still on display on the recipients wall.

Another neighbor was glad to have Mike cut trees for firewood from a swampy area on his land . . . *if* he could get in and out of there. Driving our old four-wheel drive in and out of that swamp was more fun for Mike than he’d had since he was a kid riding his bike through mud puddles.

Young Michael did not miss getting video games or brand new toys. He was too busy enjoying an early education in nature, wild edibles, animal husbandry, family togetherness, and making lots of special memories.

The time finally came when Mike got the job he wanted and we tried to be eager to return to “the good life,” as we’d thought of it before our move and change of lifestyle. We focused on all the hardships of our country life such as mosquitoes, mud, no conveniences, no friends for little Michael.

Now we live in the city and, no, we don’t miss the mosquitoes and the mud. But we do long for our backwoods home. We have become so frugal as a result of those few years that we don’t use any of the city conveniences. We still freeze, can, and dehydrate our food; buy most necessities at yard sales; combine errands to make one weekly trip (even though downtown is only 1/2 mile away); and always try to make do, make over, or do without.

As for a friend for Michael, well, we made one—a brother named Kevin. Δ

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## He combined crab pots with car repair to make his business go

*By Dave Duffy*

**J**ohn Raxa has combined two skills to make a successful living in the small coastal town of Eureka, California. He makes commercial crab pots and repairs cars and trucks.

While earning a degree in automotive technology from the nearby College of the Redwoods, he had worked for six years for a local commercial crab pot maker. Then he went into the crab pot making business for himself for several years, selling as many as 5,000 crab pots a year to commercial fishermen who worked the coasts of California, Oregon, and Washington.

But part of his business involved delivering the heavy iron crab pots to his customers, which meant he had to maintain a flatbed semi-trailer. One year, the repairs to the trailer amounted to nearly \$10,000, a sum that took a serious bite out of his income. So he decided to employ his automotive degree and opened an auto repair shop in the same building that housed his crab pot business.

He then hired a mechanic who was glad to have the job, and the mechanic, under Raxa's supervision, not only repaired Raxa's own truck, but was available to repair the cars of customers who needed that service.

Raxa finds the two businesses complement each other. "A mechanic can generally fix more than cars," he said. "I've got a lot of equipment in the crab pot shop that sometimes need repair; he takes care of that too."

Raxa says he gets most of his car business from the local telephone directory, where his ad reads: "HONEST DEPENDABLE REPAIR," and he says he makes himself or his mechanic available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. I'll vouch for that, because that's how I met him. My car

had broken down on a Sunday, 12 miles outside of Eureka, while visiting Humboldt State University to watch my daughter, Annie, perform in a chorus performance of the Northern California Honors Chorus. After calling several garages only to find out

ic out of their homes to work on a Sunday.

So I decided I at least had to buy one of his commercial crab pots, and ask him about his business. It became obvious to me that he was a success because he ran an honest car repair service, just as his telephone directory ad said, and that his crab pots were high quality.

Being a fisherman who has caught his share of crabs in both the Atlantic and Pacific, I was impressed by the sturdiness of the pots. They are made



*John Raxa builds a crab pot as mechanic Anthony Scherman looks on.*

none were opened, I saw his ad in the phone book and called him.

I had AAA tow my car to his garage, leaving my family behind in the motel we were staying at. After arriving at his garage, Raxa loaned me his truck so I could go back and pick up my family.

Both Raxa, his mechanic Anthony Scherman, and I suspected the scraping sound coming from my left front wheel was a bad wheel bearing. It turned out to be a small rock that somehow got wedged next to the brake disc.

After removing the rock, Raxa's mechanic asked him what to charge. Raxa replied, "Nothing." I was a bit flabbergasted, because I knew that I had gotten both Raxa and the mechan-

of 5/8-inch rebar to withstand the abuse of heavy commercial use. We watched him weld together one at his shop. He makes two sizes—36 and 38-inch diameter. Each crab pot is wrapped with scrap rubber to help protect it against salt water corrosion. And each contains two metal cylinders which are essential to grounding ocean static electricity to the bottom of the ocean floor so as not to deter crabs from entering. I had not known about the static electricity problem, and the information made the whole car breakdown worthwhile.

If you ever need a mechanic or crab pot, or want a lesson in how to run a successful small business, I highly recommend this guy: John C. Raxa, POB 6412, Eureka, CA 95502. Telephone: (707) 445-2704. Δ



## Try growing the popular potato

By Alice Brantley Yeager

Potatoes are the most widely distributed vegetable being used in the world today. A few centuries ago they were unknown except to the native Peruvians.

We Americans love the potato. We have improved on it and expanded its versatility until we seem to be limited only by our imaginations. The potato has been baked, fried, boiled, stuffed, scalloped, grated, riced, mashed, chilled, dehydrated and made into flour and alcohol. Potatoes are used in the manufacture of starch and, in some places, fed to farm animals. Our great-grandparents used a mixture of potato water, flour, salt and sugar to take the place of yeast in bread making. Today it is doubtful that denizens of the couch could survive without their big bags of potato chips. Witness the growing demand for the potato bar placed alongside the salad bar in restaurants. A baked potato can be stuffed with all manner of combinations—butter, sour cream, cheese, chives, bacon, broccoli, to name only a few. I like to add a few rings of canned jalapeno peppers to baked potato. Zippy, but good! A baked potato can be made as high or low caloric as one's conscience will allow.

There's even a game called "Mr. Potato Head." I'll bet somewhere there's someone working diligently to come up with something else related to the potato.

Whatever the future holds, the fact remains that potatoes are good for us. They are high in carbohydrates, thereby being a healthful source of energy. Besides containing several vitamins, including B and C, they are high in potassium. They are easy to digest, but, like other vegetables, they are

more beneficial to us if obtained as fresh as possible.

A good test for freshness is to cut a potato in half crosswise and look at the mineral ring between the skin and the starchy interior of the tuber. If the ring is narrow, the potato was dug some time ago. If the ring is wide, that's a fresh potato. Skins are also an



*The Red Norland is a very smooth, shallow-eyed, red potato with excellent quality white flesh. Early maturing, Red Norland does well in the South.*

indication of age. New potatoes have very thin skins that are easily scraped off. Older potatoes have to be peeled with a vegetable peeler or paring knife. Clean, baked potato skins are good to eat, so enjoy them too.

If a potato has been exposed to the sun while developing, it will have a green spot on it although it is perfectly firm. This greening indicates that a

poison has developed known as solanine. All portions of the tuber showing the green color should be cut away before cooking.

Sometimes we gardeners tend to shy away from taking up space in our gardens with potatoes as they are so readily available in the produce stands and usually inexpensive. Also, truckers are often seen parked alongside roads with trailer loads of sacked potatoes for sale at very reasonable prices. These are generally seconds, but many nourishing meals can be had from a big sack of potatoes. The problem is—can you use that many potatoes before they spoil? Where are you going to store them? Chances are, they will have some bruises or cuts from the machinery used to dig them and they will not keep as well as carefully hand-dug potatoes.

There's nothing like fresh potatoes from the garden and they don't have to be dug all at once. Gardeners can begin to enjoy their crop while the tubers are small. Many folks search out some little new potatoes to cook with English peas. That's a delectable dish you won't get from a fifty pound sack of seconds.

Potato plants need plenty of sunshine, a well drained soil and no weed or grass interference. The ideal soil is a loose, sandy loam with plenty of humus and potash content. If the soil has a little higher pH reading than the specified pH 4.8 - 6.5 for potatoes, don't back off from planting them. Almost any good garden soil will raise potatoes. The higher the pH, however, the more prone the tubers may be to scab. If that occurs, just peel or scrape the scab off the potatoes before cooking.

If the garden, as a whole, needs liming, don't apply lime within a year of planting to the area where the potatoes are to grow. Almost the same rule applies to digging-in barnyard fertilizers. Those are best applied several months before potatoes are to be planted so that they may be thorough-

ly decomposed by planting-time. Turning under a good green cover crop (clover or other leguminous green-manure crop) within a few weeks of planting, however, is very beneficial.

Most local seed stores will have seed potatoes available in early spring. A few will have them in the fall, but most of us tend to raise our potatoes in the spring. Fall is a risky time to make a success of planting potatoes, as temperature is a crucial factor in raising them. An early frost can wipe out a fall potato patch. Potatoes do best when temperatures go down to around 53 degrees F at night and do not soar into the upper eighties and nineties during the day. Cool-summer states like Idaho and Maine have an advantage over the South when it comes to raising potatoes.

Don't be fooled into planting potatoes you buy at the supermarket even if they begin to sprout. These won't work well and you'll end up with little or nothing to show for your effort. Buy seed potatoes that have been inspected and certified for planting purposes. Most companies sell several varieties of potatoes that are early, mid or late-maturing.

Here in southwest Arkansas (Zone 8), two favorites in our garden are Red Norland and Kennebec. They both perform well and we need to harvest before hot weather arrives. We live in a great gardening area, but summer comes on fast once the weather settles down in May.

Red Norland, as the name suggests, produces red, medium size tubers with very fine, white flesh. Norlands have good flavor and may be used in all kinds of ways. Being an early variety, there's no trouble with hot weather



*Kennebec also produces well in the South as it can be dug shortly after Red Norland. A good, all-purpose potato, Kennebec produces long, oval shaped tubers with shallow eyes and very thin skins.*

problems. Red potatoes scrubbed clean, diced (skins and all), mixed with a bit of chopped onion, seasoned to taste and fried in a minimum of butter or oleo make a savory side dish.

Kennebec potatoes are ready to be harvested shortly after the Red Norlands. (Some companies list Kennebec as a late variety and others list it as mid-season.) Kennebec has very thin white skin, much like thin tissue paper. I haven't tasted a better white potato and it is good for baking, creaming or whatever suits your fancy.

There are other good varieties, too, and it might be well to check around to see which do best in your own area, particularly if there is any tendency toward potato diseases there. Some varieties offer more resistance than others. If you're into gourmet cooking, you might like to raise some of the fingerling potatoes such as Russian Banana or Purple Peruvian.

If ordered from a seed company, seed potatoes will arrive already cut and treated unless you specify whole potatoes. If purchased locally, they will probably be whole potatoes that you will need to cut and prepare yourself. The potatoes should be cut in

fairly large pieces, each piece containing one or two eyes. If a piece contains several eyes, too many shoots will develop thus cutting down on the yield.

It is a good practice to cut the pieces a day or so in advance of planting so that the cut surfaces will dry somewhat. A "cured" surface will be more disease resistant than one freshly cut. Another good preventive is to dust the pieces with powdered sulphur before planting. This is easily done by following the same procedure as for flouring chicken pieces for frying.

Put several potato pieces at a time in a paper sack with one or two tablespoons of sulphur and shake. (Amount of sulphur will vary with number of pieces you are coating.)

The old standard practice for planting potatoes is to plant the pieces in "hills." The pieces are buried eyes up, 3 - 4 inches deep, two to a hill and hills spaced 20 - 24 inches apart. Soil should be in good condition and deeply pulverized. If clay soil is a problem, the area should be improved several weeks ahead of time by the addition of plenty of organic material, compost, etc. Like many root crops, potatoes won't do well in heavy soil.

The trench method is preferred by some gardeners particularly if they are using commercial fertilizer. Trenches are dug about eight inches deep in loose soil and the fertilizer scattered along the bottom of the trenches. Two inches of soil are put on top of the fertilizer and the potato pieces are then placed about a foot apart in the trenches. Roots will reach down to the fertilizer as they develop. (Potato pieces coming into direct contact with the fertilizer will "burn.") Fill trenches with soil and bring it up a little higher

than ground level to keep rows from becoming water traps. Space between rows should be ample to allow for easy cultivation when plants put on growth.

Keep plants hilled up by drawing dirt up around the bottom of the stems. Young plants are subject to harsh freezes, so protection should be provided if cold weather threatens. In our area, pine needles or straw are sufficient covering. As the soil warms up in late spring, a heavy mulch of organic material around the base of the plants is helpful in keeping the soil cool and pliable. It will also help to prevent dirt loss from heavy rains.

I like our raised bed method for growing potatoes. With the soil in good loose condition, I can place the potato pieces about a foot apart on top of it and then put about four inches of shredded organic mulch on the pieces for cover. Plants push through easily and the mulch adds nutrients to the soil as it decays. More mulch is added periodically to retain moisture and keep tubers from being exposed to the sun and developing green spots as mentioned earlier. This method produces a cleaner potato when harvested and talk about easy to dig!

Plants need plenty of water particularly when tubers are beginning to form. If dry weather threatens, do not hesitate to give soil a thorough soaking every few days until conditions improve. It is also important to practice rotation when growing potatoes as that will help to minimize disease and assure that soil is not depleted of nutrients as would be the case if potatoes were grown in the same spot each year.

There are several insect pests—aphids, flea beetles, etc., that can attack potato vines. The most widespread is the Colorado potato beetle, that colorful black and yellow striped, hard-shelled flier less than a half inch long. In the larvae stage, the beetles are soft worms, brick red in color with black spots, hump-backed and hungry. If only a few appear, they can be

hand-picked and disposed of, but if infestation is heavy it will take something like ten per cent Sevin Dust to get rid of them.

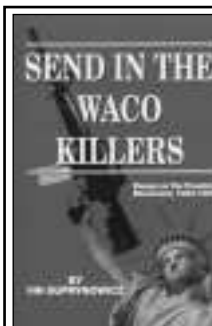
We have very little trouble with potato diseases in this area. However there are several fungus type diseases that are common to certain parts of the country and the best defense is to recognize the problem early and get some advice from the local county extension office.

Potatoes should be dug as soon as vines die down. Tubers may be spread in a shady place until any clinging dirt has dried and then they may be moved to a cool, dark, well ventilated area for storage. (Be sure no sunbeams touch the storage area as the potatoes will begin to show green spots.) If desired, dry dirt may be whisked off with a soft brush being careful not to damage the tender skins of the new potatoes. Wherever they are stored potatoes should not be piled more than a few inches high to allow for good air circulation. We have an old, but useful, refrigerator for storing our extra garden produce and this works very well for our potatoes. They will keep for several months when refrigerated.

There's a certain deep satisfaction to be had when the steam rises from a hot baked potato—a product of one's own labor and know-how. You don't get that feeling when potatoes are dug from a supermarket bin.

**Sources:** Ronnigers Seed Potatoes, P.O. Box 1838, Orting, WA 98360; J.W. Jung Seed Co, 335 S High Street, Randolph, WI 53957. Δ

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## **SEND IN THE WACO KILLERS**

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Had he lived 225 years ago he'd have written a book to detail how King George III and Parliament have tried to enslave us but, sadly, this book is about how our government today is depriving us of our freedoms and ruining the lives of thousands without changing even one word of our Constitution.

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# Your honey will love your sweet buns

*By Jennifer Stein Barker*

**S**weet rolls (or sweet buns, Danish pastries, sticky buns, coffee cake, etc.) are an American tradition for breakfast. Sometimes they are served with eggs and cooked meats, but most often such confections are served as a “Continental” breakfast or brunch, which stands alone. The big advantage to serving breakfast this way is that it can be picked up at leisure, rather than everyone having to eat at once while the cook is cooking.

The big disadvantage to the usual Continental breakfast is that the standard American sweet roll is a puffy thing composed of white flour, fat, sugar, and air. It doesn’t provide much nutrition, any fiber, or enough substance to get through the day. If you are an active person, you will probably find yourself hungry by 10 am after one of these “breakfasts.”

Following are some recipes which produce exquisite sweet rolls and buns, with the substance necessary to keep you going till lunchtime.

## About flour

To make a nice soft sweet roll (or to make any whole grain bread softer), you need the most finely ground whole wheat flour you can find. Fine whole wheat flour will provide a more satisfying roll in every way (flavor, texture, nutrition) than white flour or a blend of white and wheat.

Wheats come in two varieties, soft wheat which is used to make “pastry” (cake) flour, and hard wheat which is used to make bread flour. Pastry flour has little to no gluten, and is used for cookies, cakes, and quickbreads leavened with baking powder or soda. Yeasted breads, rolls, and sweet rolls need gluten, in order to trap the little bubbles of gas produced by the yeast as it multiplies. This is how breads get the leavening action from yeast.

While gluten is naturally found in the flours made from hard wheats, it needs to be worked by kneading or beating the dough in order to develop properly. If you are beating a soft dough to develop gluten, use an overhand stroke, and “roll” the dough over and over with your spoon, until it develops thick, ropy strands. If kneading, work the dough for 5-10 minutes, or until it springs back from pressure and develops a smooth, satiny surface.

You need a fine-textured flour to make the softest buns, but ordinary bread flour will do in a pinch. If you cannot get superfine bread flour, and still want a very soft pastry, you can add gluten flour to your whole wheat pastry (cake) flour in the proportion of 2 tablespoons per

cup. Gluten flour is a highly refined product, so you don't want to use too much of it.

Have a great time making these goodies, as your family will have when eating them!

## Fruit ring

This is a classic sweet breakfast pastry, with a choice of fruit fillings.

Makes a 9x13-inch ring:

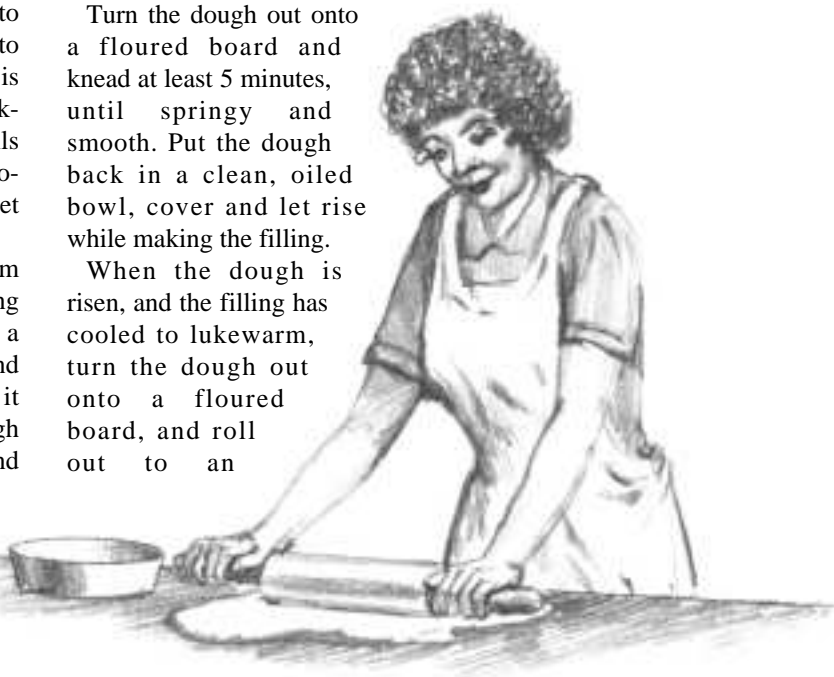
1 cup warm water  
2 Tbsp. dry milk powder  
3 Tbsp. oil  
3 Tbsp. honey  
2 tsp. dry yeast  
1 egg  
1/2 tsp. salt  
3 cups fine whole wheat bread flour  
about 1/4 cup broken nut meats (optional)

### Method:

In a medium-large bowl, whisk the milk powder into the warm water. Whisk in the oil and honey. Dissolve the yeast into the mixture, add the egg, and mix well. Allow to set in a warm place for about 10 minutes, or until the mixture begins to foam up. Add 2 cups of the flour and beat well. Continue stirring in flour until the dough forms a ball.

Turn the dough out onto a floured board and knead at least 5 minutes, until springy and smooth. Put the dough back in a clean, oiled bowl, cover and let rise while making the filling.

When the dough is risen, and the filling has cooled to lukewarm, turn the dough out onto a floured board, and roll out to an





oblong 10x20-inches. Spread the filling lengthwise down the middle third. Sprinkle with nuts if desired. Fold the two long edges over the filling. Roll onto an oiled 9x13 baking sheet with the double layer down. Bring the two ends of the roll around to form an oval.

With a sharp knife, make cuts about 1 inch apart all the way around through the top layer of dough. Put one hand down through the center of the roll, and one on the outside. Gently lifting and stretching, pull the dough towards all the corners of the sheet. The bottom layers will stretch, and the top one will part to show the filling.

Cover the ring and let rise until double in bulk, about 45 minutes. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. When the ring is risen, brush a little water over the top strips of dough to make a glaze. Bake for about 25 minutes, or until the top is golden and the ring is done. Serve warm or cool.

### Apple filling

3 cups diced apple  
1/4 cup honey  
1/4 cup raisins  
1/8 tsp. cinnamon  
1 tsp. lemon juice  
2 tsp. water  
3-4 tsp. cornstarch

Cook the apple, honey, raisins, and cinnamon together just until the apples begin to be tender. Mix the lemon juice, water, and cornstarch in a cup (use more cornstarch if apples are particularly juicy). Add to the apples, and cook over low heat just until thick. Cool to lukewarm.

### Prune-date filling

3/4 cup chopped dates  
3/4 cup chopped prunes  
1 cup hot water  
1 Tbsp. honey  
1/4 tsp. almond extract

Soak the fruit overnight with the hot water and honey. In the morning, if it has not soaked up all the water, cook over low heat until thick. Stir in the almond extract. Cool to lukewarm.

### Honey twirls

When I was in college, the cafeteria called these "Cinnamon Knots" and I was addicted to them! Some people also call them "Sticky Buns."

Makes 1 dozen:

2/3 cup warm water  
2 tsp. dry yeast  
2 Tbsp. oil  
2 Tbsp. honey  
1/4 tsp. salt  
1 egg  
3 Tbsp. milk powder  
2 cups fine whole wheat bread flour

Filling:

2 Tbsp. oil  
1/4 cup honey  
1 tsp. cinnamon  
1/2 cup broken pecans or walnuts

In a large bowl or small bread bowl, dissolve the yeast into the warm water. Add the oil and honey, and let sit in a warm place for 10 minutes, or until the yeast foams up. Add the salt and egg, and beat well. Stir the milk powder into the flour, and add to the liquid in the bowl. Beat well until gluten strands form.

Warm the oil, honey, and cinnamon for the filling together just until they will blend easily. Roll out the dough on a well-floured board to a 12-inch square. Spread half of the filling on it, and sprinkle with half of the nuts. Roll up, and cut across the log with a sharp knife to make 12 equal pieces.

Oil a 12-section muffin tin. Combine the remaining filling and nuts, and divide evenly among the tins. Place rolls, cut side down, in the tins. Cover and let rise in a warm place until double, about 1 hour.

Bake in a preheated 350 degree oven for 20-25 minutes, until golden and crusty on top. Remove from pan immediately by twisting each roll as you lift it out. Invert on rack and cool sticky-side up. Best eaten warm!

### Cinnamon-oat rolls

Chewy, nutty, spicy and delicious! These rolls take a little extra time, but they are worth every minute.

Makes a 9x13 pan of 24 rolls:

1 1/2 cups rolled oats  
2 cups warm water  
1 Tbsp. yeast  
1/2 cup lukewarm water  
1 tsp. honey  
1/2 tsp. salt  
3 Tbsp. oil  
1/4 cup honey  
2 Tbsp. gluten flour  
4-5 cups bread flour

**Filling:**

4 Tbsp. honey  
1 tsp. brown rice flour  
4 tsp. cinnamon  
1/3 cup broken walnuts  
3/4 cup raisins

Combine the oats and the 2 cups of water. Let soak for 10 minutes. Meanwhile, proof the yeast in the 1/2 cup of water with the 1 tsp. honey. When the yeast foams up, combine the two mixtures and add the salt, 2 Tbsp. honey, and oil.

Beat in the gluten flour and 2 cups of the bread flour. Beat well until gluten strands form between the spoon and the bowl. Add more bread flour, 1/2 cup at a time, until the dough is ready to knead.

Knead the dough on a floured surface at least 7 minutes, until it is smooth and springy. Place the dough in a clean oiled bowl, cover it, and let rise in a warm place until double in bulk. Warm the honey just till it is liquid, and stir in the rice flour and cinnamon. Have the nuts and raisins handy.

Oil a 9x13-inch baking pan, and set it near your work surface. Turn the dough out onto the surface and roll out to a 1x2 foot oblong (the oil from the bowl should keep it from sticking). Spread the cinnamon mixture on the dough, and sprinkle evenly with the nuts and raisins. Roll up across the short direction, so you have a "log" 24 inches long.

Cut the log into 24 equal (about 1-inch) slices. Place the slices in the pan, cut side up. Make 6 rows of 4 rolls. Cover the pan and put in a warm place to rise until double.

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Bake the rolls for 25 to 30 minutes, or until the tops are golden. Serve warm, if possible.

### **Orange-poppyseed breakfast rolls**

These rolls need no adornment, but a little raspberry jam will elevate them to the sublime! Please use organic oranges, because you will be using the peel.

Makes a 9x13-inch pan of 24 rolls:

2 large oranges  
1/4 cup finely chopped date pieces  
3 Tbsp. honey  
2 Tbsp. poppy seeds  
1 Tbsp. dry yeast  
1/2 tsp. salt  
2 Tbsp. oil  
4-5 cups fine whole wheat bread flour

Get out a medium bread bowl. Using the fine side of the grater, grate the orange part of the peel off the two oranges. Squeeze the juice from the oranges, and add enough warm

water to make 2 cups of liquid. Add the liquid to the peel in the bowl.

Add the chopped dates, honey, and poppy seed. Stir well to combine. Sprinkle the yeast over the mixture, and stir to dissolve. Let sit in a warm place for 10 minutes, or until the yeast foams up.

Add the salt and oil, then stir in the flour until stiff enough to knead. Turn the dough out onto a floured board, and knead at least 7 minutes, or until smooth and springy. Place the dough in an oiled bowl, turning to oil the top, cover, and let rise 2 hours or until doubled in bulk.

Prepare a 9x13x2-inch pan by oiling it lightly. Divide the dough into 24 equal pieces, and shape the pieces into round rolls. Arrange in the pan in 6 rows of 4 rolls. Cover and let rise about 45 minutes, until double. Bake in a preheated 350 degree oven for 25-30 minutes, or until the rolls test done. Cool 10 minutes in pan, then on a rack until thoroughly cooled before storing.

If these rolls will be kept more than a day, they are best kept in the refrigerator. Δ

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## The pecan is a nut to love

By Alice Brantley Yeager  
(Photos by James O. Yeager)

If I were to venture a guess as to which is the most popular nut in America, I'll bet it would be the pecan. Not only are the kernels delicious to eat fresh from the shell, but they are also highly regarded for use in many culinary preparations extending into the gourmet class. The nuts from the papershell cultivars are the most desired commercially, but they can't beat the smaller native pecans for flavor. Regardless of preference, one of the things folks look forward to is the annual pecan harvest.

Early in the growing season, there's speculation as to whether the crop will be heavy or sparse. Those of us most interested in the subject are furnished periodic newsletters from the local county extension agent's office. These reports tell us if there are developing problems in the form of casebearer moths and other pecan insects, scab, too much rain, drought, etc.

An abundant yield of pecans means money in the pockets of the growers as well as lower prices for consumers. A light harvest doesn't benefit anyone. Prices are high and often the nuts aren't of top quality. It seems to be a rule of nature here in southwestern Arkansas for a heavy crop to be followed by a light one. The same thing holds true for many other fruit and nut crops.

Georgia and Texas are the top producers of pecans and Texas is the only state with the pecan tree as its official state tree. There is a story that C. W. Post (cereal family) saw a cluster of pecans at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893 and came down to Texas to find out more about the nuts. Consequently, a new cereal was named "Grape Nuts."

Old native pecan trees can reach 140-150 feet in height at maturity

each bearing hundreds of pounds of pecans in a good season. Indians treated the trees with respect as life sustaining food trees and many forest creatures partially depend on them for survival. However, early settlers, probably because of the abundance of the trees, would chop down an entire tree just to get the nuts. Native pecan trees are long-lived and some of the victims were hundreds of years old.



*Papershell pecan grove near Texarkana, AR. Land used for pecan groves often serves a double purpose. If owners are cattlemen, they will pasture their cattle in the groves during the growing season.*

The natural range of native pecan trees in the United States seems to be from eastern Iowa across to Indiana and down through the river flood plains to the Rio Grande. Migrating birds and animals have done their part in widening the range of pecan trees. Humans have helped too. One famous example occurred when Thomas Jefferson shared some seeds with George Washington. The pecan trees planted at Mount Vernon are said to be the oldest trees on the property.

With the advance of cultivated and improved varieties, pecan orchards are

now big business and the trees are being grown wherever soil and climactic conditions are favorable. Some small orchards allow people to come and pick up pecans, usually on the halves. Most large producers, having hundreds of acres in production, use machinery to shake the pecans out of the trees at harvest time—a far cry from cutting down the whole tree to collect nuts.

From an economic standpoint, there are no better trees for the homeowner than pecan trees. City folks are usually restricted to one or two trees

depending on the size of their yards, whereas people living in rural areas usually have more room to plant trees. When the trees reach bearing age, one can forget about having to pay high prices for pecans in supermarkets. As pecan trees grow older, crops will increase to the point that there will be a surplus to sell. That is, unless moochers appear about the time the pecans begin to fall. In that case, the owner of the pecan trees must devise methods to protect his /her crop. A plain but scrawled sign reading "Keep out or you'll be persecuted" usually works. I think it's the last word that

gets some people. They don't know exactly what the owner has in mind. Squirrels and crows are another matter as they don't pay much attention to signs.

Besides the harvest, there are a number of fringe benefits attached to pecan trees. These deciduous trees produce plenty of leaves that can be raked up and composted or used for organic mulch. They give nice shade in the summer and their bare branches let the sun in during winter. Pecan trees raise real estate value and homeowners should realize the importance of taking care of their trees with regard to pruning, spraying and fertilizing in order to obtain the maximum benefits from them.

Pecan trees need soil with pH 6.0 - 7.0. They thrive best in soil that has been enriched through cultivation for a number of years. The trees will grow faster and yield quicker in bottom land than in hilly areas, as the bottom land retains moisture longer and is generally richer particularly where there have been alluvial deposits from rivers over a long period of years. Observe the improved variety pecan groves scattered along our famous Red River Valley as well as other river valley areas. Many large old native pecan trees may still be seen thriving in the midst of farms and pastures.

Trees will generally begin bearing in 7 - 10 years, although some of the high density varieties are advertised as bearing sooner than that. The first few pecans harvested can hardly be what



*When storing nuts for the winter, the squirrels have nothing on us. These pecan halves will be put in the freezer where they will keep indefinitely and be used in cakes, pies, candies, salads, trail mixes—you name it.*

you had in mind when you planted the trees, but patience has its rewards, so hang in there. A pecan tree is not a fast maturing tree like a peach or plum, but it will be producing nuts long after the fruit trees are gone and forgotten.

Almost any nursery that carries nut trees will have an assortment of pecan trees. Know the good and bad points about your locality before selecting or ordering trees. Investigate which trees do best in your zone. Some varieties are advertised to be hardy as far north as Zone 5, but generally speaking, most will be in the range of Zones 6 - 9. If there are pecan trees already in your neighborhood, find out which varieties they are and how well they have done. A little research will pay off as money and time spent on trees highly susceptible to scab, for instance, is money down the drain if your locality is scab prone. A County Extension office is a good place to get information on varieties best suited for your use plus some tips on caring for your trees.

Whichever variety you select, be sure that you pay

attention to nursery pollination charts. Although pecan trees are self-pollinating, a larger yield will be had if there are other pecan trees nearby or if you purchase more than one variety.

When your trees arrive, plant as soon as possible. If weather conditions are prohibitive, put the trees in a cool room and check occasionally to see that they don't dry out. Most nurseries now use the clipped root system, so follow their instructions regarding pruning the trees before planting.

When ground can be worked, dig a hole considerably larger than needed and put enough loose top soil in the bottom of the hole in order to place the tree at the approximate depth as when it grew in the nursery. (Usually, the soil line is easily seen on lower trunk.) Spread the roots, gradually filling the hole with loose dirt until it is about two-thirds full. Gently firm the soil and slowly pour in about a gallon of water. This will help get rid of any air pockets that might form around roots. Finish filling the hole with soil and pour in another gallon of water. This should take care of settling the soil.

If you live in an area subject to summer drought, make an earthen dam



*A comparison in size. The large pecans are Stuarts and the small ones are natives.*



about 6 inches high and about 3 feet in diameter around the tree. Mulch with organic matter—straw, pine needles, etc.—and check from time to time to be sure the tree has enough moisture. The first years of growth are very important as stunted trees are practically worthless as far as production is concerned. A pecan tree is a long term investment—probably the best you can make in trees for the money.

If you are planting a number of trees, remember that pecan trees need space to spread out, so don't try to crowd them into small areas. Trees need from 50-75 feet between them if they are standard varieties such as Stuart. If they are smaller trees such as the Indian varieties—Cheyenne, Kiowa, etc. they need from 20-30 feet between them in rows about 35 feet apart. The latter are known as high density varieties as more can be planted per acre than in the case of the standard cultivars.

Despite the fact that the large, thin-shelled pecans bring top prices at the produce stands, pecan connoisseurs will readily admit that it's not the size of the nut that is indicative of quality. It's true that the large nuts have good flavor and are easier to shell than the small native pecans, but for superb

flavor one must turn to the natives. These small nuts are higher in oil content than the large ones and are excellent for culinary use. Witness the popularity of the praline, that sugary concoction that is best savored from a home-owned candy kitchen in the Deep South and that is always a money-maker for church and charity bazaars.

The old phrase, "A-nutting we will go," has as much meaning today as it did long ago. There's nothing like the feel of a crisp November day with a blue sky overhead and plenty of pecans lying around to be gathered and enjoyed throughout the winter and beyond. Part of the fun is sampling a few pecans while gathering. New pecans need to dry out a bit before putting them to kitchen use. The recipe list is endless for this popular item—pies, cakes, salads, dips, stuffings—you name it.

Our favorite variety is the Elliott, as it seems to be consistent in quality. This pecan is thin-shelled and kernels are well filled out with excellent flavor and oil content. Some of the larger pecans such as Mahan or Stuart require an almost perfect season to avoid some shriveling of kernels. Pecans should be stored in a cool, dry place for winter use. They will keep



*Native pecans ready to drop from their hulls at the next passing breeze.*

for several months before becoming rancid, but, with the coming of warm weather, the quality will rapidly deteriorate. The best method for keeping pecans and doing the household cook a favor, too, is to pick out the kernels while they are fresh and freeze them in freezer bags or air-tight containers. The nutmeats will keep indefinitely and there's no danger of losing the goodness of the pecans. Kernels do not stick together when frozen so it's a simple matter to take what one needs from the container and return it to the freezer.

A word to those who would take the cheap way out by planting a pecan and raising a tree from a seedling—what you plant isn't necessarily what you are going to get. Improved cultivars such as Stuart are grafted, so if you're really interested in size and quality, it's best to pay the nurseryman's price and have something worthwhile.

**Sources for pecan trees:** Stark Bro's, P.O. Box 10, Louisiana, MO 63353; Gurney's Seed & Nursery Co., 110 Capital Street, Yankton, SD 57079; Henry Field's Seed & Nursery Co., 415 N. Burnett, Shenandoah, IA 51602. Δ



*These are only a few of the many pecan cultivars now available from nurseries. Before planting it's best to consult with your county extension agent to determine which varieties do best in your area.*



# Use non-hybrid seeds and save big bucks in this year's garden

By Jackie Clay

Every person who is striving for self-reliance should, and most do, plant a garden from which to raise a good portion of their own food. But how many of us really study ways to get the most food out of our money invested? Having spent a lifetime with earnings below the "poverty level," I certainly have! And here are a few helpful tips for every gardener to ponder on.

## Grow only open pollinated varieties

While the popular trend these days has been toward only growing hybrids, this is **not** a good policy for folks aiming at self sufficiency. First of all, the seed of hybrid vegetables does not grow true, should you save your own seed. You may get what you want, or you may not get taste, productivity, or even appearance. Only open pollinated (or "heirloom" "traditional") varieties will produce seed which, when saved and planted next year, will give you the same results as the parent plant.

You can study your seed catalogs carefully. Any listed as "Hybrid" or "F1" should be avoided.

Get in the habit of saving your own seeds. This simple practice can cut your gardening costs down by 1/4 or 1/2. Seed saving is simple and very satisfying. Many seed catalogs, such as the ones published by *Native Seeds/Search* and *Garden City Seeds*, also have extensive information on seed-saving.

An additional reason to raise non-hybrids is that most of the open pollinated varieties taste better. That's opposite what we have been led to believe...often by seed companies, who, by the way, often hold the rights to certain hybrids they developed and/or sell.



*Author with cukes, four hours away from bread and butter pickles*

The good old heirloom varieties taste great. True, you might not be able to ship them 1500 miles in a truck, they might not last 10 weeks in a warehouse, or they might not have thick rinds or skins to prevent bruising during rough handling, but in a home garden, or even a small market gar-

den, who cares? I'd rather have the taste.

And cost? Where many open pollinated vegetable seeds may be purchased very reasonably, the hybrids are now selling for high prices—many more than \$3 a pack where you have to carefully count your 15 or 30 seeds. And when you save your own seeds, you only buy once. The seeds you buy as a seed bank will provide generations of vegetables.

## Buy with care

Even with open pollinated seeds, there is a great deal of difference in the cost of the same varieties of seeds. Early in the year, send for several seed catalogs and carefully compare prices.

If you can, get together with gardening friends and relatives, buying seed as a coop venture. Not only can you split larger packets of seed, but you save significantly on the shipping and handling.

Try not to buy seeds off the racks in stores. Here you will usually find those trusty hybrids along with higher prices. You can sometimes find seeds on sale but usually there are few seeds in the pack and you can buy and raise better varieties.

Remember you are developing your own seed bank and need to find great family favorites, not just yellow beans or sweet corn.

## Plan carefully

Raise only what you can take care of. This sounds basic and simple, but after 30 some years of gardening, it's one I still struggle with. You can get more tomatoes out of 12 plants, cared for like babies, than 40 plants left to weeds, insects, and other forms of

neglect. If you have “left-over” space in your garden, tuck in a few squash, pumpkins, or plant it to rye or another form of green manure crop.

Assess your weed problem. If you don’t have much of one, consider planting a good portion of your garden in wide rows or beds. Onions, carrots, beets, greens, and others grow well together, shading out all but major weed problems effectively.

I even grow garden peas in a bed rather than a row, picking the vine and all as the majority of peas ripen. Then feeding the vine to the stock, I reuse the bed as a bean patch with the beans planted in rows. Remember that commercial peas are grown in field conditions and mechanically harvested at one swipe. You can do this too, getting more peas per square foot as they support and shade each other as well as choking out any competing weeds.

I do not plant bush beans this way, as the plants are heavier, and the leaves of closely planted beans can end up interfering with pollination. And it is definitely harder to pick beans well when they are crowded. I have found that a spacing between plants of 8 or even 12 inches (depending on variety), and rows 18 to 24 inches apart, yield much better than crowded plantings. It allows complete pollination (beans are largely self-pollinating), plus ease of picking the three or more flushes of bean crops. An additional bonus of uncrowded planting is that if you live in an area where there are venomous snakes, you can see better.

Don’t plant your tall corn where it will soon shade other heat/light-loving plants such as tomatoes. Or don’t plant vine crops, such as cukes, where they will crawl out onto carrot rows or beds. Plan many times—plant once!

Short of garden space? You’d be amazed at how many veggies you can grow in flower beds, tubs, buckets, and other containers or in a very small garden plot. There are many varieties suitable for container growing, from determinate (bush-type) tomatoes,

bush cukes, squash, peppers (which like a bit of crowding), and even onions, greens, and eggplant.

Plant vining crops in the lawn (dig out the sod in a circle two feet in diameter) where the grass is poor anyway, and let ‘em sprawl. Or plant them in flower beds next to the house, the garage, etc, and trellis them up on old fence wire or string. Tomatoes and cukes don’t climb, but can be trained, tied gently at intervals as the vines grow. I’ve seen folks in apartments grow a huge garden on their roof. They just used recycled containers and a huge imagination.

No room to grow bush beans? Grow pole beans instead, trellising them up on a three-pole tipi or strings on the side of the garage. A few hills of pole beans will provide enough beans for a family to eat, plus a few pints to can as well.

## **Succession of crops**

You can get more bang for the buck out of your garden, especially if you are limited in space, by planting successions of crops. For instance, instead of planting all late bush beans or corn, plant two or more crops in succession, using the same area as the early veggies. I plant a big patch of Venture green bush beans, radishes, lettuce, and other early crops, which mature in less than 50 days. Then when they are about done I quickly till them under when production fades. I plant the same total area into an early sweet corn, such as Black Aztec or Early Golden Bantam.

The beans help put nitrogen into the soil, and tilling keeps weeds to a minimum. If the weather is warm, corn zooms up, usually much exceeding the maturity dates in the catalogs.

The bottom line is that from a patch 30 feet by 10 feet I get late sweet corn and the bonus of beans, greens, and more.

Never leave an area in the garden bare after crops have been harvested. If you don’t need the area, plant it

anyway—for seed, to barter, sell, or give to those who need it. Or plant it into a green manure crop to further enrich the soil and discourage weeds.

## **Plant wisely**

Many gardeners always plant all of the packet. Now, who needs 1,500 radishes all at the same time? Nine hundred summer turnips? Fifty zucchini plants? Not me.

Plant what you truly need. Few families need more than a two foot row of well planted radishes. But keep planting all summer and fall, and you’ll always have nice mild, crisp radishes. You may only need two zucchini or summer squash plants.

Plant what you need, then carefully close the packet and tape or staple it shut and pack it into a glass jar, sealing it against rodents, insects, and dampness. It’ll keep until next year.

Have enough seed that you never plant all of what you have. This is common sense preparedness. I planted a huge garden this year and nearly all of my early planting was totally consumed by a plague of grasshoppers. With a sigh and a few very dark thoughts, I tilled my garden under, and promptly replanted, with seeds that I had saved.

As the seedlings popped up, I kept them dusted and sprayed with organic insecticides, spread grasshopper spore bait around to give them the “plague,” and harvested so much produce it was all I could to get it put up. Most neighbors planted once using all their seeds, had their gardens destroyed, and promptly gave up. Having the seeds right on hand to replant, and replant again, if necessary, gives one the feeling of preparedness.

Most seeds keep well, for years if kept cool, dry, and in the dark. There are a few exceptions. Onions keep one year, and parsnips two years, but generally your personal seed bank should be treated as carefully as your financial bank.

## Good garden care

To get the absolute most out of your garden, for the least money, it must receive good care. Limit the size of your garden to what you can truly handle. Maybe you need to limit the size next year to what really works.

If you have a good tiller, great soil, and few weeds, your garden can be larger than if you till by hand, have poor soil, and a huge weed problem.

## Your own plants

You can go out to the garden center or the market and buy tomato, pepper, and eggplants, often sold in four packs or six packs for better than two dollars each. But these may not be varieties that will taste good or perform well in your area, and they will most likely be hybrids. You will not be able to “save your own” from their seeds.

Instead, how about shopping those seed catalogs early and choosing some open pollinated traditional and heritage seeds that produce plants that do it all—taste great, perform well under your garden conditions, look pretty, and have the additional benefit of letting you save seeds to grow next year’s plants?

Each packet contains from 30 to 150 seeds in most cases. Enough to start plants for your family and a friend or relative this year, and to keep some for next year.

Starting the seeds is easy. Peppers (no matter what the pack says) should be started 12 weeks before you would even begin to think about setting them out, tomatoes 8 to 10 weeks, and the same for eggplant. Using seed starting medium from the nursery, fill the container (an old bread pan, flat, or whatever) and moisten the soil well with warm water, not soggy and certainly not dry. Then carefully place your seeds on top of the medium, keeping at least an inch apart in all directions. Plant a few more than you need, as some may not germinate and some

may die. If I want a dozen finished plants, I plant about 20 seeds.

Cover the seeds evenly to about 1/8 inch, then gently sprinkle with hot water until moist, and cover with clear plastic leaving an air space between plastic and soil. Place in a warm place, such as on top of the fridge or on a high shelf. Warm air rises. Germination may take place in as few as three days, so check every day or the seedlings will quickly become too leggy to ever recover. Peppers usually take quite a bit longer, but check, just in case, as I’ve had some take right off.

Keep the medium damp, but never soggy or the seeds will rot. When the seedlings just begin to show up, move the container to a window where there is at least eight hours of strong light (a south window is best, never a north window). If there is not a good window, use a Grow Light or a two-bulb fluorescent shop light, with the plants only two to four inches below the light. As the plants grow, move the light up, keeping the same distance between plant and light. Keep turning those plants in the window, so they don’t grow leaning toward the light, but straight and stocky.

As they get two sets of leaves, it’s time to transplant to an individual container, or rows in a larger flat, keeping three or four inches between plants in all directions. An additional transplant is beneficial when they seem to be growing too large.

When warm weather hits, gradually harden these plants off by moving them outdoors in a protected location out of direct sun and high wind for a few hours in the morning. Then, gradually, leave them out longer, moving them to a less protected area. Be sure they do not dry out during this hardening off period. It’s easy to forget them and have this happen. And watch those cold evenings as you begin to leave them out at night.

Now they’re ready to plant, with protection, such as Walls-O-Water to warm them in case of cold. If you

plant them without such protection, wait until all chance of frost is over and plant with some protection against the wind if needed in your area. Here, I plant them in deep basins, both for ease of water collection and to keep the wind off.

In just the same way, I raise my sweet potato starts from mother sweet potatoes, saved from last year’s crop. I insert four toothpicks into the mother about half-way down, then place it in a glass full of water. Setting several on a sunny window ledge in late January. I begin to see sprouts forming above the water line area. Slowly these develop into leaves which grow into the sprouts.

As soon as the nights are dependably frost free, I just pull these sprouts out of the mother and set them into well worked, warm, damp soil on a nice day. Believe it or not, these rootless sprouts soon begin to grow and thrive. No cost sweet potato plants!

Irish potatoes? Same way. I just save some of the nicest potatoes from the garden for seed for the next year. I save medium sized potatoes and plant the whole thing or half if it is very large. You might buy your first sets to try some different varieties. Then on finding your favorite, just develop your personal seed bank, and never buy seed potatoes again.

## Insect control

Other than weeds, which most folks figure out how to control, insects cause the most loss of garden produce. Now all gardens do not have insect problems. But few of us are that lucky, especially if it is a relatively new garden.

Keep a close watch on each row or plant. Lift the leaves and really look. When you see insects, learn what they are. You don’t want to kill a big group of lacewings thinking they are the bad guys, as they are your friends eating harmful insects. Learning about harmful garden insects is a great winter project.

If you just find one or two bad guys, such as potato beetles, for example, just pick and squash 'em. Then watch closely, as more may soon show up. If this is the case and they get thicker, then picking and squashing them will work. Begin a treatment with an effective organic spray or dust. Again, studying books and catalogs will quickly provide you with the needed information. Generally I use such sprays as Bt, which only affects caterpillars which eat sprayed leaves, and rotenone, one of the least toxic organic compounds.

Only spraying once or spraying only when the problem is severe is not cost-effective as you will lose a lot of produce and not stop the insects. You must generally spray or dust after each rain or overhead watering. Often a week or so apart even when the dusting doesn't wash off.

For corn ear worms begin spraying Bt when the corn is knee high, not tassled out, not even showing ears. Then spray every week thoroughly.

Your problem will soon disappear as the corn ear worm moths are not reproduced in cycles. Always be watchful, even years later.

### Harvest prudently

We've all had 'em—battleship sized cucumbers, string beans with golf ball sized beans. Not only is this wasteful (we could have had great pickles and beans), but allowing produce to mature on the vine/bush tells the plant to stop putting out flowers which stops further production. This is why picking the very first beans, even if a bit scarce, is necessary, to insure a heavier harvest, which will also last for a longer period of time.

Keeping all cukes picked before maturity will allow a 20-foot row to provide all the salad cukes and all the pickles that an average sized family could possibly eat in a year.

I let some ripen and mature so I can save my own seed. I choose only one or two plants. More for beans, peas, or

corn. These are my best plants, ear marked as seed producers. All the others are kept picked, which more than doubles production.

### Suggested reading:

Seed to Seed: Saving our Vegetable Heritage by Suzanne Ashworth

The New Seed Starter's Handbook by Nancy Bubell

The Organic Gardener's Handbook of Natural Insect and Disease Control by Barbara Ellis and Fern Bradley.

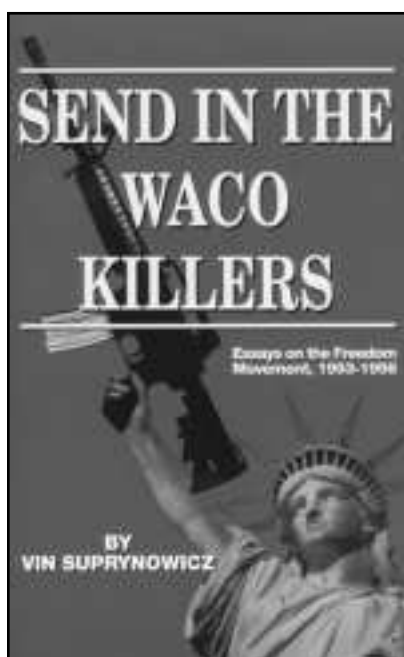
### Catalogues:

*Garden City Seeds*, 778 Highway 93 North, Hamilton, MT 59840 (free catalog)

*Native Seeds/SEARCH*, 2509 North Campbell #325, Tucson, AZ 85719 (catalog \$1)

*Southern Exposure Seed Exchange*, P.O. Box 170, Earlsville, VA 22936 (catalog \$2 — much culture and seed saving information. Δ

## SEND IN THE WACO KILLERS



Three times the International Society of Newspaper Editors has included Vin Suprynowicz in their list of the 12 top weekly editorial writers in North America. For years his shoot-from-the-hip style has opened the eyes of thousands to government abuse of our liberties. In this book, Send in the Waco Killers, he blends material taken from his syndicated column with new commentary to give the reader a detailed, reporter's-eye-view of how the rights and freedoms of Americans are being subverted.

He uses factual accounts from the daily news to show how the Feds use the drug war, the public schools, jury rights, property rights, the IRS, gun control, and anti-militia hysteria to increase its power and control over us. He details how agents of the ATF and FBI have routinely lied, how they use paid informants to infiltrate Constitutionally-protected militia groups, then fabricate evidence to get arrests and discredit them.

Had he lived 225 years ago he'd have written a book to detail how King George III and Parliament have tried to enslave us but, sadly, this book is about how our government today is depriving us of our freedoms and ruining the lives of thousands without changing even one word of our Constitution.

If you read no other book this year, read Send in the Waco Killers. Just keep your blood pressure medication handy. 506 pages, trade paperback, \$21.95 + \$3 S&H.

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## Solar oven casseroles are good and easy

*By Jennifer Stein Barker*

In sunny summer weather, a country person's thoughts turn to spending as much time as possible outdoors. The last thing on the mind is cooking complicated dishes in a hot kitchen. Ideally, a meal for this kind of weather should be both fuss-free and nutritious, to provide lots of time and energy for that outside work. It should also include some of your own home-grown garden vegetables.

If you are lucky enough to own a solar oven, you can provide yourself with good, nutritious meals all summer without spending lots of time indoors cooking. A solar oven uses the rays of the sun, intensified by reflectors and dark paint, to provide all the heat needed to cook. It does not use any electrical energy or fossil fuels. It just sits there and gathers in the energy that is freely delivered by old Sol for all of us to use as we will.

Solar ovens have the slight drawback that cooking in them may happen more slowly than you are used to. The greater the mass of food in the oven, the longer it will take to reach cooking temperatures. You cannot just "turn up the heat," and get the food to the boiling point rapidly. You must learn to allow for this extra time in your cooking.

However, once the food is brought to the boiling point, standardized cooking time is used (except for slight variations caused by elevation above sea level). If brown rice is done after boiling for 45 minutes on an electric or wood stove, it will be the same in a solar oven. The only difference will be the amount of time necessary to bring the food to the boil.

An advantage you will love getting used to is that of care-free cooking. If you cannot check your food and turn the oven's reflectors toward the sun every 15 to 30 minutes, don't worry. Your food will cook a little slower, but it will never burn! The sun just moves on past the untended solar oven, and the interior temperature drops below the danger point.

There are several types of solar ovens, but all use the principle that the sun's rays, reflected to intensify and magnify their effect, will produce enough heat to cook a meal. Most use an insulated box as the "oven". My favorite solar oven is the "Sun Oven," which is a commercially made oven, available from many solar dealers (I got mine from Kansas Wind Power, a *BHM* advertiser.) I like it because it is convenient to use and store, easy to clean, and uses the sunlight efficiently. These recipes were all developed with the "Sun Oven," but they will work in any solar oven. Cooking times may need to be adjusted for other brands or homemade ovens.

Casseroles cook very well in solar ovens, because they are one-dish meals. Ideally, you should have a casserole dish which fits into your solar oven, and which will hold enough food for the number of people you normally feed. Glass dishes allow you to see the food and check the progress of the cooking without opening the oven and losing valuable heat. Dark dishes help collect more heat from the sun. Lids are necessary to help hold the heat in.

I usually use an amber glass covered casserole by Corning which holds 2 liters. That makes enough for the two of us if the casserole is all we're eating, or for four people if we are having a full-course meal with bread, salad, and dessert.

### General cooking instructions:

Casseroles have a large amount of water incorporated into them in order to cook the pastas, grains, and legumes. They can be put into a cold oven and the whole thing can come to boiling temperature together. Once the contents come to a boil, cooking time will be the same as in a conventional oven, but it may take quite a while to get the whole mass up to a boiling temperature.

If you are assured of a clear day, and your casserole doesn't require more than 1/2 hour of boiling time, you can place it in the sun oven, turn it towards where the sun will be at 3:00, and go away. Dinner will be ready and warm at 5:30 (don't do this with meat or any other potentially dangerous food). For longer cooking times, you must start earlier and turn the sun oven at least every 1/2 hour or so to keep the contents boiling.

You can help speed the cooking time by preheating the solar oven. If you do this, be careful. An empty solar oven may quickly become hot enough to smoke the interior paint (over 450 degrees). Solar ovens need the mass of food inside to moderate the temperature. If you preheat an empty solar oven, always leave the glass open a crack, or watch the oven closely and put the food in as soon as the temperature reaches 350 degrees.

Any recipe designed for a slow cooker will do very well in a solar oven. Plain rice or grains can be cooked in the solar oven, and a quick stir-fry made on the woodstove or campstove at the last minute to go on top of it.

Following are some of my favorite solar oven casseroles. Instructions for conventional kitchens (electric, gas, or wood stoves) are included for those not lucky enough to have a solar oven and plenty of sunshine.



## Mama Gianna's easy veggie lasagna

This is a one dish lasagna with nothing precooked. If you do not have a covered casserole, you must use foil to cover the pan, because the noodles need the steam to cook! This is great with whole wheat lasagna noodles. Serves 2-4:

### Sauce:

3 cups chopped tomatoes (fresh or canned)  
1/2 cup water  
1 Tbsp. red wine  
3 cloves garlic, minced  
1 tsp. oregano  
1/2 tsp. basil  
1/4 tsp. fennel seed, crushed  
1 Tbsp. tamari

### Veggies:

1 medium carrot, grated  
1 green pepper, diced  
1/2 cup diced onion

### Cheese:

1 cup ricotta  
1/4 cup Parmesan  
1 egg, beaten  
freshly-grated black pepper to taste  
grated mozzarella for topping (optional)

### Noodles:

8-10 lasagna noodles, or enough to make two complete layers in your pan

Preheat the solar oven and get out a 2-liter or larger casserole. In a medium bowl, mix together the sauce ingredients. In another medium bowl, toss together the prepared vegetables. In a small bowl, stir together the cheeses, egg, and pepper.

### Layer as follows in the casserole:

1/3 of the sauce  
a layer of uncooked noodles  
all the vegetables  
1/3 of the sauce  
all of the cheese mixture  
a layer of uncooked noodles  
1/3 of the sauce

Cover the casserole with a lid or foil (this is necessary to keep the steam in with the noodles), and bake until the sauce has been bubbling vigorously for 1/2 hour (because of the liquid mass of this one, it will take a long time to bring it to the boil).

When the noodles are cooked, the lid can be removed and a layer of grated mozzarella may be added to the top of the lasagna. Bake 15-20 minutes more, uncovered, until the cheese bubbles and browns.

### Conventional oven instructions:

Bake, covered, at 350 degrees for about 1 1/2 hours, until noodles are tender. Then follow instructions for adding cheese on top.

## Risotto

This is a baked rice dish—Italian style. If you cannot get fresh oregano and lovage, follow the substitutions for “winter risotto.” Serves 3-4:

1 2/3 cups raw brown rice  
2 Tbsp. lentils  
1 1/2 cups chopped or ground tomatoes  
2 2/3 cups stock or water  
1 small onion, sliced thin  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
1 small turnip, coarsely grated  
1/3 cup chopped fresh oregano  
2 tsp. finely chopped fresh lovage leaf  
dash Tabasco  
1/4 tsp. ground cumin  
1 Tbsp. olive oil  
1 Tbsp. tamari

### Winter risotto:

For the fresh oregano and lovage, substitute:  
2 tsp. dried oregano, crushed  
1/2 tsp. fennel seed, crushed or ground

Combine ingredients in a two liter or larger casserole. Stir to mix. Bake, covered, in sun oven until all liquid is absorbed. The rice and lentils should be tender (if not, add more liquid and adjust recipe). When it is done, the herbs will be on the top. Stir everything together before serving. Serve with a crusty bread and green salad.

### **Conventional oven instructions:**

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Combine all ingredients in a two liter or larger casserole. Stir to mix. Bake, covered, until all the liquid is absorbed and the rice and lentils are tender, about two hours. This may also be made in a slow cooker.

### **Blackeyed peas and rice**

Blackeyed peas and rice are a traditional Southern combination. Combine them with plenty of vegetables and season “just right” for an easy-to-fix meal. The greens are a traditional touch. Use whatever kind of tender greens you have in your garden or at the store: turnip, beet, chard, mustard, etc.

Serves 3-4:

1 cup diced onion  
1 1/2 cups uncooked brown rice  
1/3 cup blackeyed peas, picked over and washed  
5 cups water  
2 Tbsp. tamari  
1/4 tsp. Tabasco  
1/2 tsp. ground coriander  
2 carrots, sliced or diced 1/2-inch  
1 white turnip, sliced or diced 1/2-inch  
1 bay leaf  
1/2 tsp. dry thyme  
1 bunch greens (see above), washed and shredded

In a 2 liter or larger covered casserole, combine all the ingredients except the greens. Place in the solar oven and bake, covered, until the casserole has boiled for about 45 minutes and the liquid is absorbed. Remove the casserole from the solar oven, and immediately stir in the greens. Replace the cover on the casserole, and let stand for 5 minutes. Serve immediately, garnished with grated cheese and salsa if desired.

### **Conventional kitchen instructions:**

In a large saucepan or Dutch oven over medium heat, saute the onions in 1 Tbsp. olive oil until transparent, adding a little water as necessary to keep from sticking. Wash the blackeyed peas and add them, and then add the rice and five cups of water. Add the tamari, Tabasco, coriander, carrots, and turnip. Stir together.

Bring the pot to a boil, lower the heat, and simmer, covered, for 45 minutes without stirring. Remove the cover and taste the beans and rice. They should be tender. Poke a spoon to the bottom of the pot, and if there is less than 1/4-inch of liquid on the bottom, add 1/4 cup of water. Add the greens, the bay leaf, and the thyme, then stir. Turn the heat as low as it will go, and cook for five more minutes, stirring frequently. Once you stir the pot and release the starch from

the rice, it will tend to stick. As soon as the greens are wilted and minimally cooked, remove the pot from the stove.

This may also be cooked in a slow cooker. Use solar oven instructions.

### **Curried rice and lentils**

A quick and easy main dish, best served with a big salad on the side. Use either raw or toasted cashews as you prefer. Serves 3-4:

1 1/2 cups raw brown rice  
1/3 cup lentils  
4 1/2 cups water  
1 1/2 cups diced onion  
3 cloves garlic, minced  
2 tsp. fresh ginger root, minced  
1 tsp. turmeric  
1 tsp. cumin  
1/2 tsp. coriander  
1/8 tsp. cayenne  
2-3 Tbsp. tamari (to taste)  
1/4 cup cashews  
2 cups fresh or frozen peas

In a 2 liter or larger covered casserole, combine all the ingredients except the peas. Place in the solar oven and bake, covered, until the casserole has boiled for about 45 minutes and the liquid is absorbed. The rice and lentils should be tender. If not, add more water and adjust the recipe. Remove the casserole from the solar oven, and immediately stir in the peas. Replace the cover on the casserole, and let stand for 2 or 3 minutes.

Serve with a green salad and chutney. Optionally, you can use the cashews as a garnish instead of stirring them in.

### **Conventional kitchen instructions:**

Put the rice, lentils, and water in a large saucepan and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer, covered, until the water is absorbed, about 45 minutes. Do not stir while cooking. Check for doneness by sticking a spoon straight down through the rice and pushing it to one side to see if the water on the bottom of the pan has been absorbed, then taste for tenderness.

Meanwhile, heat 2 tablespoons olive oil in a medium frying pan and saute the onions, garlic, and ginger root gently until the onions are transparent. Add the turmeric, cumin, coriander, and cayenne and cook to “toast” the spices for a few moments. Scrape the mixture into the cooked rice and lentils, add the cashews and frozen peas, let sit for 2 or 3 minutes.

This may also be cooked in a slow cooker. Use solar oven instructions. Δ

## Ayoob on firearms

*By Massad Ayoob*

### Four X .44 —the logical backwoods handgun

**S**partan lifestyles go hand in hand with backwoods living. Instead of getting a dozen little variations of everything, the tendency is to get one and make do. If you're only going to have one handgun, what should it be?

Many would vote for the .22, and a strong argument can be made in that direction. The ammo is cheap. The guns are accurate. Mild report and almost non-existent recoil make them ideal for teaching youngsters and newcomers marksmanship, and for recreational target shooting. They're perfect for shooting rats raiding the granary or for hunting squirrel and rabbit size critters. However, they're generally inhumanely underpowered for use on anything deer size and larger, and if you're an Alaskan backpacker facing a grizzly bear, you'll find yourself looking at your little .22 and wondering whether to shoot the bruin or yourself. Most experts also agree that the .22 lacks potency for self defense, but it's certainly better than nothing.

The .357 Magnum is a versatile choice. Light .38 wadcutters are perfect for squirrels, varmints with a short shot from house to garden, or a practice session with the kids. .38 Special 158 grain lead +P hollowpoints are quite adequate for home defense and easily controllable in rapid fire. If you've paid your dues with lots of shooting experience, the much hotter 125 grain .357 Magnum cartridge is a legendary manstopper, and 158 to 180 grain bullets are adequate for deer, if barely so. Taking this wide range of cartridges makes the .357 extremely versatile.

Still, for my money, the "four by forty-four," a .44 Magnum revolver with four inch barrel, may be the top

choice. In a full 180 to 240 grain Magnum load, it's an excellent deer cartridge. With the heavier bullet, it'll do nicely on New England black bear. Load up some 320 grain SSK bullets or buy some factory 300 grain Pro-Load cartridges and it'll be your best insurance against big bears, and an amply suitable handgun for elk and moose.

Living and working outdoors in game country is almost like full time hunting. The trick is having the gun with you. If you work with your hands, you'll quickly get tired of a slung rifle, and won't always be able to reach a long gun that's in the truck, on the tractor, or leaning against a fence when a shot presents itself. Long barrel revolvers are fine when hunting is the dedicated task, but can get in the way of a strenuous day's work. The four inch barrel .44 revolver, carried in a high ride holster behind the hip, is out of the way and much more convenient for all day wear. It'll be there when you need it. And you can cover it up discreetly when you go into town, with your carry permit of course tucked in your wallet.

My choice is the Smith & Wesson, known as the Model 29 in blue or nickel finish and as the Model 629 in stainless. I've had both and now use the 629 almost exclusively. My particular favorite is the Mountain Gun variation. It has a tapered barrel like the old Target Model .44 Special, which is not only more graceful but noticeably lighter for all day carry. It draws fast and reholsters easy. Yes, it kicks more, but here's a tip: the Mountain model comes with the round-butt gripframe, and K-RB size Pachmayr Compac grips not only fit it

perfectly, but are shaped to cushion the recoil into the hand with amazing efficiency. The gun still wants to move a lot when you fire, but it doesn't sting the hand nearly as much when doing so.

Why the S&W? Single actions like the short Rugers are handsomer and more traditional, but slower to fire. Ruger's double action Redhawk is a fine gun, but bigger and heavier than the Smith. Because the gun may be used defensively against man or beast, the double action is the fastest style to shoot, and much faster to load or reload, especially with readily available speedloaders.

With the .44 as with the .357, the Magnum revolver will take the milder Special cartridge. .44 Special factory ammo is a pussycat to shoot in these guns; my daughters found that out when they were each ten years old. Winchester Silvertip and Federal lead hollowpoint .44 Special are very adequate defense rounds. A good middle ground for the experienced shooter is the "urban load" by Triton Cartridge, a devastating 165 grain hollowpoint at 1250 feet per second. This may be the .44 Magnum defense cartridge of choice. It practically takes a Ph.D in combat handgunning to learn to shoot the brutally recoiling full power .44 Magnum ammo with the requisite speed and accuracy for police and self defense work.

These are accurate revolvers. As a rule, they'll stay in six inches or so at a hundred yards if you do your part and have a solid rest position.

If you join me in this choice, you'll find we're both in good company. Elmer Keith, the legendary outdoorsman who convinced Smith & Wesson to introduce the .44 Magnum in 1956, carried a 4" Model 29 on his hip daily until his death. He killed much big game with it, including a controversial

buck at the incredible distance of 600 yards. Some thought it impossible, but the people who knew Keith and his extraordinary shooting skills believed him. I didn't know Keith personally, but my old friend Bill Jordan was tight with him and told me once, "Nobody who's seen Elmer shoot would stand six hundred yards away and let Elmer shoot at him with a four-inch .44!"

Personally, the farthest I've used one of mine is 120 yards, a small impala that I shot for food in the Eastern Transvaal of South Africa one day when our party was running low on provisions. Normally, I'd prefer to hold my shots to about fifty yards with an iron sight revolver of this type.

Most double action revolvers are tight enough in the trigger guard area that a gloved finger can block the trigger's return and jam the gun after the first shot. These big N-frame S&Ws are large enough in that area that I find I can shoot them rapidly and reliably with gloves on. It's an advantage for those of us in cold weather climates.

With my Mitch Rosen Ayoob Rear Guard holster, the S&W .44 rides inside my waistband and conceals easily under even a loose-fitting untucked shirt. The new Kydex holster from Blade-Tech is a favorite when I don't need concealment, and exquisitely fast to draw from. If farm chores are in order, a flapped holster will best protect the gun, and while you won't win quick draw contests with it, it'll be at hand when you require its services.

I've carried the four-inch S&W .44 Magnum from America's West Coast East, and in Europe and Africa. It's never failed me. It may be the best backwoods firearm for everyday wear, if your needs include ample power along with excellent "shootability."

(Mas Ayoob's classes in armed self defense are taught nationwide. For information contact Lethal Force Institute, PO Box 122, Concord, NH 03302, or check the LFI website at [www.ayoob.com](http://www.ayoob.com).) Δ

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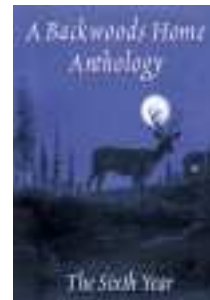
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## Build a fish pond—just for fun

*By Dorothy Einsele*

The following is a short how to story about the fish pond I put in our yard. I hope it will inspire others to do the same.

I woke up one Saturday morning in April of '94 and said, "I want a fish pond in our backyard." So, after breakfast I grabbed some gloves and a shovel and ventured out to start my project.

One could say it was a labor of love or possibly an obsession but I had a dream and so I went head first into what is now a delight for our whole family, fish included.

I never had fish before, not even a boyfriend with fish so I was guided by instinct. My husband's only comment as he looked on rather skeptically was, "You might want to put it where they'll get some shade or they'll fry."

Having found the perfect spot I started digging. Mid-day I realized I needed to line my pond with something, so we went to town and bought a roll of black plastic, 16 fish, and some food. I was anxious to see the little guys swimming about, so keeping them in a bucket of water I quickly lined the hole I dug, filled it with the garden hose, put in a few rock houses, and in they went. I later lined the perimeter with rocks so it looked real nice.

Well, after that, I was pleased and thought I should find out a bit more about fish and ponds, so I asked everyone I could and found out quite a bit. Now, with over three years experience and happy fish, I'd like to share what I've learned, because anyone can have a pond with minimal effort and expense. Of course one could go all

out and buy pond pumps and expensive rubber liners—for that check out a nursery for more info.

Okay, so here's what you can do:

Buy a roll of 6 mil. black plastic at least 20 x 25 feet—or 2 rolls if you want your pond bigger than, say, 8 foot long x 2 feet deep. Remember to dig more than two feet deep to allow for the plastic. A roll of plastic is about \$20.

Go on a rock hunt. My son was real helpful with hauling good flat rocks. If rocks aren't available, you could purchase cement stepping stones sold in garden stores.



*Our backyard fish pond was easy to build.*

A perfect spot for your pond would be one where there are not too many deciduous trees that will dropping leaves into the pond. The fish need good sun and some shade. Also avoid tree roots, unless you're willing to cut a few if they get in the way.

The hole should be a minimum of two feet in the center so they can winter over. Make a shelf around the sides, and be creative with different depths and shapes. Remove any sharp rocks and roots.

It's now ready for the plastic. If you don't want to fuss with it for years, I

suggest you get two rolls of plastic and plan on three or four layers. One roll doubled over is enough for a 1 1/2 x 5 1/2 x 2 1/2 foot pond. Get in there and fold the plastic around the contours, leaving about 8 to 10 inches of overhang to be covered by the rocks.

I didn't want to use a pump so I have a hose hidden under rocks set up to drip water in at any time. And I purchased a siphon bulb so I can drip water in and siphon water out just like a natural pond. In hot weather you can leave that going all day long, or the fish can go days or over a week in the same water, then you can empty out half or so and refill it.

I think you'll find that being around the pond is quite enjoyable, so maintenance is a pleasure. I use a small bucket to clean off debris from the top, especially after a rainy or windy day. You'll find that they love it when you pour water from the bucket, making bubbles (oxygenating). Feeding is also part of the fun. They seem to prefer the pellets that float.

Naturally, in no time you will have created an ecosystem which will support all sorts of living things like the water striders. Birds and squirrels will also enjoy your pond.

You will probably want to buy some greens; one or two bunches is plenty. They grow freely once established. Twenty or so fish are plenty. You may lose a few at first. It seems better to start with extra fish rather than introduce new ones later. Have fun watching them grow.

Our fish pond is a wonderful addition to our home. It can be a family project or your own personal undertaking. It can be a place you go to relax and meditate, or just part of the landscape enhancing your yard.

I do hope anyone who wants a pond just gets out there and does it. It's easier than you might have thought. Δ



# THE IRREVERENT JOKE PAGE

(Believing it is important for people to be able to laugh at themselves, this is a new feature in *Backwoods Home Magazine*. We invite readers to submit any jokes you'd like to share to *BHM*, P.O. Box 40, Montague, CA 96064. There is no payment for jokes used.)

A cat dies and goes to heaven. God meets him at the gate and says, "You've been a good cat all these years. Anything you desire, all you have to do is ask." The cat says, "Well, I lived all my life with a poor family on a farm and had to sleep on hardwood floors." God says, "Say no more." And instantly, a fluffy pillow appears.

A few days later, 6 mice are killed in a tragic accident and they go to Heaven. God meets them at the gate with the same offer He made the cat. The mice said, "All our life we've had to run. We've been chased by cats, dogs, and even women with brooms. If we could only have a pair of roller skates, we wouldn't have to run any more." God says, "Say no more." And instantly, each mouse is fitted with a beautiful pair of tiny roller skates.

About a week later, God decides to check and see how the cat is doing. The cat is sound asleep on his new pillow. God gently nudges him awake and asks, "How are you doing? Are you happy here?" The cat yawns and stretches and says, "Oh, I've never been happier in my life. And those meals on wheels you've been sending over are the best."

The average woman would rather have beauty than brains, because the average man can see better than he can think.

Patty and Mike were walking along the street and came across a building with a sign that said Taco Bell. Patty turned to Mike and said, "I didn't know the Mexicans had their own phone company."

Three blondes got in the car and drove to Disneyland. When they exited the freeway, they saw a sign, "Disneyland Left." So they turned around and went home.

I LIKE CATS!  
(THEY TASTE LIKE CHICKEN!)

Letter to the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, D.C.  
(Submitted by a potential pig farmer)

Dear Sir:

My friend Ed Peterson, over at Wells, Iowa, received a check for \$1,000 from the government for not raising hogs. Therefore I want to go into the "Not Raising Hogs" business next year.

What I want to know is, in your opinion, what is the best kind of farm not to raise hogs on, and what is the best breed of hogs not to raise? I want to be sure I approach this project while keeping in line with all government policies. I would prefer not to raise Yorkshires, but if that isn't a good breed not to raise, then I will just as gladly not raise Durocs or Razorbacks.

As I see it, the hardest part of this program will be in keeping an accurate inventory of how many hogs I haven't raised.

My friend Peterson is very excited about the future of the business. He has been raising hogs for 20 years or so and the best he ever made on them was \$628 in 1982, until this year when he got your check for \$1000 for not raising hogs.

If I get \$1,000 for not raising 50 hogs, will I get \$2,000 for not raising 100 hogs? I plan to operate on a small scale at first, holding myself down to about 4,000 hogs not raised, which should mean about \$80,000 the first year. Then I can afford one of those new Dodge Ram 4 wheel drive pickups.

Now another thing. These hogs I will not raise will not eat 100,000 bushels of corn. I understand you also pay farmers for not raising corn and wheat. Will I qualify for payments for not raising the corn that won't be needed to feed the 4,000 hogs I am not going to raise?

Also, I am considering the "Not Milking Cows" business too, so please send any information you have on that program.

In view of these circumstances, you understand I will be totally unemployed and will need to file for unemployment and food stamps. Please let me know when you plan to distribute free cheese and flour in this area.

Be assured that you and Bill Clinton will get my vote in the coming election.

Patriotically yours,  
Joe Schmoe

While waiting two hours at the Honolulu Airport for their next flight to San Francisco two friends decided to go have a drink. It was early in the morning and none of the bars were open so they ended up down a hallway and in a room filled with 50-gallon barrels of jet fuel. John said to his friend Gary, "A friend of mine drank this stuff once and it got him super high." Gary said, "Hey, let's try some." They both drank their fill and laughed all the way to San Francisco on the plane.

Later that afternoon John called Gary to ask him if he was feeling O.K. Gary said, "Yeah, just great. I've never felt so good after not sleeping all night—and I'm still laughing." John said, "Well, I just called to warn you—whatever you do, don't pass gas—I did and ended up in Miami."

## Wild raspberries—summertime's finest treat

By Linda Gabris

One for me, Grandpa would laugh as he smacked his lips loudly, savoring one tangy, juicy raspberry after another. His eyes twinkled as he danced about, making sure that he was safely out of Grandmother's sight. "And," he'd continue, his knobby fingers expertly working amongst the prickly thorns, "one for my pail..." He'd gently place a berry in the large, shiny tin can that dangled from his waist, looped to his belt by its shoestring handle. This left both hands free for picking and eating. Grandmother and I would be rigged up in similar fashion, pails hanging from cloth belts strung around our middles. Only we would actually be busying ourselves trying to fill our pails, whereas Grandpa never collected near as many raspberries as he ate!

Ever-so-often on our berry-picking-outings, Grandmother would catch Grandpa pickin' and eatin' and she'd give him a scolding. "No raspberry dumplings for you tonight..." she'd threaten, but Grandpa just couldn't help himself. The berries were too irresistible. Even Grandmother and I would stoop to temptation and sample a few berries while hidden neath the fragrant greenery of the woody canes. At the end of the day, berry stained lips and tongues easily tattled on us all.

"Two for me..." He would yum secretly. "One for my pail. Three for me...One for my pail..."

Regardless of Grandpa's hand to mouth habit, an afternoon of raspberry picking out back of the old sheds, out-buildings and open wooded areas around our farm would yield a plentiful mess of fragrant, delicious berries. Picking often throughout their growing season—from early July to late August, we'd collect enough berries for grandmother to make into all our favorite dishes. Besides plenty of berries

to use in fresh raspberry pies, tarts and squares, we also collected enough to do up into treats to last over the winter months, too.

Raspberry preserves, syrup and jam brought colorful summer flavor to our table all year round. I still look forward to picking wild raspberries today with as much relish as I did years ago when I was a girl. And I must admit, raspberries are still my favorite summer treat. Not only wonderful tasting—but the very thing that good memories are made of.

On a hot summer day, nothing quenches the thirst better than an icy tall glass of raspberry frizzle. This homemade 'pop' comes from a very old recipe handed down to Grandmother from her mother. It's not only an exceptionally pretty drink and great tasting as well, the really nice thing is that you can easily control the sweetness in your drink by adjusting the amount of syrup per glass.

To make raspberry syrup, sprinkle fresh picked, washed raspberries generously with white sugar and let stand overnight at room temperature. The sugar will draw the flavor out of the berries. In the morning, take a hand masher and crush the berries until all the pulp is off the seeds. Run the berries through a sieve or cheesecloth. Discard the seeds. Birds like them so you might mix them in with your bird

feeder seeds. Measure the juice. To each cup of juice, add two cups of sugar. Stir well. Heat to boiling and simmer about five minutes. Bottle in sterilized jars. Grandmother stored hers in the root cellar. I refrigerate mine.

### Raspberry frizzle

To make raspberry frizzle, pour water over ice in a tall glass. Stir in a spoon or two of raspberry syrup—the drink should be pleasantly rosy in color. Add a dab (half a teaspoon of white vinegar) to the drink. If you'd rather, you



*Wild raspberries*

can use a squeeze of lemon instead of vinegar. Stir and serve.

Raspberry syrup is also delicious stirred into a glass of cold milk, poured on top of pudding, cake or ice-cream, or mixed with soda. For toasting special occasions, I use Grandmother's traditional old recipe for making a light, refreshing cocktail. Pour white wine into small stemmed glasses and flavor with raspberry syrup. This is a lovely drink to accompany a trush of grapes and a plate of mild cheese at afternoon get togethers.

Nothing tastes better on fresh bread or biscuits than homemade raspberry jam. This old recipe of Grandmother's follows her simple 'rule of thumb' for jam making—"Equal parts fruit to equal parts sugar with a squeeze of lemon to 'pucker' and your jam will never fail...." Even the novice jam maker can have success with this recipe.

### **Easy raspberry jam**

6 cups fresh wild raspberries (the store-bought kind will do, but honestly, they don't measure up to the little wild treasures)  
6 cups white sugar  
juice of 2 lemons

Combine berries and sugar in a big, heavy bottomed kettle. Place over heat and stir constantly, bringing to a boil. Boil for 30 minutes, stirring and watching so it doesn't scorch. Add lemon juice. Boil to jellying stage—when a drop of jam sets on a cold plate. Pour into hot, sterilized jars. Seal with paraffin wax. Store in cellar or fridge. Makes about 8 or 9 jelly jars. Recipe can easily be halved or doubled.

### **Aunt Aleta's blue ribbon dumplings**

Simmer for about 5 minutes:

2 cups raspberries  
1/2 cup water  
1 cup honey

Mix 3 teaspoons of cornstarch with 1/4 cup of water. Add to berries and thicken over low heat. Set aside and make dumplings.

#### **Dumplings:**

1 1/2 cups of flour  
1 Tbsp baking powder  
pinch salt  
3/4 cup milk  
pinch of nutmeg

Mix flour, baking powder and salt. Stir in milk and nutmeg. Drop by spoonful into a kettle of simmering water. Cover and cook for 10 minutes. Spoon out of water, drain and place into dessert dishes. Smother with the prepared raspberries and crown with fresh cream, if you like. These are equally good served warm or cold.

### **Grandmother's raspberry-buttermilk pot**

This recipe I share from memory as Grandmother never had it written down. You just take some fresh buttermilk and gently heat it to boiling. Add honey to taste. Next, mix in some crushed raspberries, seeds and all. Stir. Eat hot with the help of a spoon. This is a very different treat—I find it pleasantly reminiscent of yogurt. You might call it a hot fruit soup.

### **Wild raspberry tea**

All summer long, I enjoy a wonderful tea steeped up from fresh raspberry leaves. To make raspberry tea from fresh leaves, just pick a handful of leaves, wash under cold running water and put into a teapot. Pour boiling water over leaves and allow to steep until desired strength is reached. If you like strong brew, use more leaves. If you prefer weaker tea, use less.

Sweeten this delicate tea with honey if you wish. To savor raspberry tea all year long, collect as many leaves as you can, wash, pat dry and spread on screens or paper and allow to dry in the attic or warm place until crispy. Crush with hands and store in tea tins. Use as you would any loose tea. Raspberry tea is said to be a good relaxant. I find it's a nice tea to drink before bedtime as it is so mild and pleasing.

Wild raspberries are summertime's most wonderful offering. Don't let a season go by without sampling their sunny goodness. Δ

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# Build your own portable forge

By Corcceigh Green  
(photos by Gene Lewis)

Looking for a handy summer project while building skills, supplies, and knowledge to put away for a rainy future? Here's one to consider: try making your own forge. The ability to forge scrap metal into useful tools is a skill that can bring self reliance and even extra income to any handy person willing to turn a hobby into a part time trade. Whether you're just pounding out a simple project like a poker or hammering out custom knives, you'll be building the tools and skills you'll need to become more self reliant in the future.

Building a small, portable hobby forge is not that difficult. This article will show you how to build one from a charcoal grill. Later, when you delve more deeply into blacksmithing, you can build yourself a full blown smithy.

Let's start with what you'll need. For my first forge, which I built six years ago, I started with an old portable 24-inch charcoal grill. Next, I bought myself some iron pipes and fixtures: one 18-inch pipe, two 6-inch pipes, one 8-inch pipe, two pipe caps, one elbow connector, and one T con-

necter. All pipes and fixtures were 1-inch diameter, and all pipes were threaded on both ends.

## Black or galvanized pipe?

Buy black pipe. If you buy galvanized pipe, you will have to let it "burn off" for a few hours before you can use it. "Burning off" is the process where, after you've completed your forge, you load it with charcoal (not storebought charcoal) and burn while forcing air through the pipes. During this process, approach the forge only to load coals, and come in with the wind. The zinc in the galvanized pipes is burning off at this time and will pose a hazard, as it is toxic.

Next, you'll need 12 fire bricks.

Here's how to build your portable forge: Screw one end cap on one end of each of the 6-inch pipes. Next, using a drill press or hand drill with a one quarter inch drill bit, drill holes (not on the threads) on one side of a pipe. Start at the open end, drill a hole, then measure one half inch toward the opposite end and drill another hole. Repeat this process until you have a line of holes running between the

threads, from one end of the pipe to the other end. Next, using the same drill bit, offset the pipe to the right one half inch, and drill between the existing holes, again from one end of the pipe to the other. Repeat this process one half inch to the left of the first holes drilled and you have finished the first pipe. Do the same thing with the other pipe. Check with Figure A for a visualization of the hole pattern. You do not have to drill all the way around the pipe, as you want the air to flow



*The portable forge, made from an old charcoal grill, fire brick, and iron pipe.*



*Placement of the bottom bricks and tuyere*

upward only, through the coals in the forge.

Now take the T connector and, using the same drill bit, drill three holes (see Figure B) parallel with the threading one half inch apart and 3 quarters of an inch inward away from the threading. Complete this process on both sides of the T connector's parallel connectors. Next, screw the 6-inch pipes into the T connector so that all the holes face the same way, as in Figure B. Now connect the 8-inch pipe into the stem of the T connector. That's it; you've just built a tuyere, the part of the forge that channels air up through the coals.

For the body of the forge, assemble the 24-inch diameter charcoal grill. You only need to connect the charcoal burner to the tripod. You don't need



*Assembled forge with shop-vac*

the grill, and you can remove the center grill holder with a hack saw. Next, drill out the bottom center of the burner so that the one inch diameter pipe will fit through the hole. You can use a reamer and a hand drill for this job. When looking from the ground up, your hole must be directly in the center of the burner.

Next, before laying the bricks out in the burner, I like to spread ashes in the burner so that I have a flat surface in which to lay out the bricks. In place of ashes, sand will work fine.

Next, lay fire bricks, face side down, in accordance with Figure C. With your six remaining fire bricks you will make a rectangular box by laying the remaining bricks edge down on top of the face down bricks (see the photos). You've just completed the body of the forge.

Since you now have the tuyere and the body of the forge, you can simply put everything together by placing the tuyere's 8-inch pipe down between the bricks through the bottom hole of the forge. Then screw the elbow connector to the tuyere's open end, then to the 18-inch pipe. You now have the means to force air through your forge.

As a blower to actually force air through the pipes, you can use a squirrel cage blower or bellows. For simplicity I use an old shop-vac with one end of its hose on the exhaust outport and the other end put over the open end of the 18-inch pipe. Make sure that the shop-vac's hose is attached to the exhaust port. You want to force air up through the pipes, and through the coals. You do not want to suck smoke and hot coals down into the shop-vac.

I would like to point out here that I have not recommended that you lay the bricks permanently with mortar, or in this case refractory clay. This way you can remove the bricks and pipes for mobility.

Once you've connected the shop-vac or blower, you have completed the project, and you now own a forge, one of the central pieces of equipment that you'll need for blacksmithing projects.

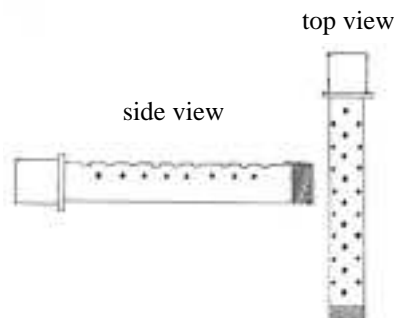
Other pieces of equipment you'll need are: an anvil, (which can be made from a length of railroad track or I-beam), a cross pein hammer, 2 or 3-pound sledge, a pair of tongs, a metal ash can to catch coals and hot embers as they fall through the bottom hole of the forge. Sooner or later, you'll also want two metal cans that

can accommodate hot metal of at least three feet in length—one for water to cool iron and mild steel, and for emergencies, and the other for oil to quench and harden high carbon steel.

## Making charcoal

Earlier in the article, I stated not to use store-bought charcoal (the kind most people cook out with). This is because store-bought charcoal contains impurities which can contaminate the steel or iron being worked, and can cause your project to become brittle. Fortunately, you can make your own contaminate-free charcoal.

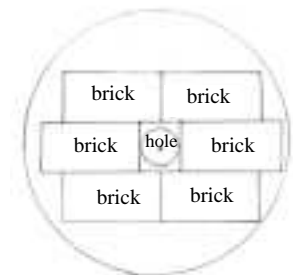
Start by gathering some hardwood such as maple, oak, hickory. In many cases willow is preferred. I have had good results with all hardwoods. Saw the wood to adequate length (between the span and half the span of a hand). Chop to different thicknesses, but no thicker than is long. Next, you can either dig a fire pit or do as I do, which is use an old gas-burning grill with a lid with the gas components removed and the bottom lined with fire bricks. When I am sure the fire is burning adequately, I load the grill (or pit) with an abundance of hardwood and close the lid. In the case of the fire pit, cover with dirt, leaving one or more small openings to act as chimneys. Allow to burn for some time, 15 minutes to half an hour depending on the size of your pit/grill. Check periodically. When the wood becomes blackened through most of its depth, but not fully consumed, you have charcoal fuel. Depending on your pro-



*Figure A*



*Figure B*



*Figure C*



ject, you may need between one and three wheelbarrow loads of charcoal fuel. If the hardwood is burning into ash, or becoming too fully consumed by the fire, you are allowing too much oxygen into the fire. If this happens, block off places that air is getting in with more dirt, or bricks. When you are satisfied that you are getting quality charcoal, remove your charcoal from the fire using tongs, and bury it

in sand or dirt, or immerse it in water or, in the case of the fire pit, bury fully, blocking all air intake, and allow the fire to smother.

Now that you have your forge, fuel, and other essential equipment, you'll be ready for your first project. Unless you have a well ventilated smithy, you'll have to wait until dark. The reason for dark is that you must be able to see the color of the steel or iron

being worked. You must bring the iron or steel you are working up to a red color before you can shape it with the hammer. In broad daylight this process is too difficult to discern, but much easier in dim light.

In a future article, we'll go over the process of shaping scrap metal into useful tools. Δ

## Extend the vase life of flowers

*By Tom R. Kovach*

**T**here are a number of simple ways in which to get longer enjoyment out of fresh-cut flowers. The first thing you should do after bringing in your flowers is to recut the stems about one inch from the bottom, making an angled cut with a clean, sharp knife. Then remove all the lower foliage from the stem. This will prevent bacteria from building up in the water.

Fill your vase with warm water as this contains fewer air bubbles than cold water does. If you allow air bubbles to get in the vase, they can get trapped in the stems and block the uptake of water to the upper foliage and the flower. Warm water also works best to thoroughly dissolve floral preservatives.

Add a floral preservative to the water. Preservatives contain substances that prevent bacteria from forming in the vase water and provide an energy source to assure long-lasting full blooms.

Homemade preservatives work about as well as commercial ones. Use a half gallon container and put in one-fourth gallon of water, one-fourth gallon of lemonade, and one teaspoon bleach. Make enough of the preservative to cover at least the lower three to four inches of the stems where the foliage has been removed. Because the flower can no longer produce its own carbohydrate food sources, the sugar acts as an alternative energy source. The lemon or lime in the soda provides citric acid, which acts as a preservative, and the bleach prevents bacteria from forming in the water. This mixture will also help the flowers bloom if buds are not fully opened.

Place your flower vases with the new cut flowers in a cool, well-lit place. Don't put them in direct sunlight or near

heaters or air-conditioners because drafts will dehydrate your flowers.

Make sure you keep the flowers away from ripening fruits or vegetables. The ethylene gas they release speeds the decline of fresh cut flowers.

If a preservative has not been used, change the water every two days and recut the stems. With a preservative, recut the stems and change the water every four or five days.

Flower arrangements in florist foam bricks should be watered every day so the foam doesn't dry out.

There are certain kinds of fresh cut flowers that require special care. Some of these flowers include roses, tropical flowers like orchids, heliconias, strelitizias, and anthuriums.

Roses are very susceptible to air bubbles lodging in their stems. The bent necks that result from this can be prevented by cutting the stems under warm water. Make an angled cut with a clean, sharp knife. Don't crush the end of the stems because this can greatly decrease the flower's vase life. Thorns may be removed as long as the stems are not injured.

Orchids and other tropical fresh flowers do best if they are frequently misted with water. Tropical flowers like higher humidity levels so they should be kept away from air-conditioning and heating units to limit moisture loss.

If orchids or other flowers in a corsage appear to be limp when you put them in a vase, recut the stems and place the entire flower under warm water for one hour. If corsages are not immediately used, put them in a container of water in the refrigerator.

Refrigeration helps preserve freshness only if moisture is also available. Tropical flowers are especially sensitive to the deteriorating effects of ethylene gas. Δ

## Dixie butterpeas — not just for the South

By Alice Brantley Yeager

Don't let the name "Dixie" fool you. Dixie butterpeas are not strictly for the Deep South but will thrive almost anywhere lima beans grow. Speckled Dixie butterpeas are a fun job to shell as the opening of each pod reveals a different color arrangement. Depending on the stage of maturity, the butterpeas range from light green to speckled pink to deep red. When cooked, they lose quite a bit of their color but their flavor remains superb.

If you have never tasted these little nuggets of buttery goodness, you have a special treat in store when you plant speckled butterpeas. (The speckled type is different to the white butterpea, as the latter is only one color as the name implies.) Speckled butterpeas have a distinct rich lime flavor all

their own and like okra, thrive in hot weather if given an occasional soaking when summer rains taper off. From their first crop in early summer until the cool days of autumn, plants continue to put on pods if kept picked and tended.

Butterpeas are easy to grow, but one should wait to sow seeds until spring weather has stabilized and soil has warmed somewhat. The eager beaver who plants Dixie butterpeas in the cold soil of early spring is in for a rude awakening, as seeds will either rot or seedlings will be stunted. Late frosts play havoc with most bean plants, so the gardener who wants a bumper crop should be familiar with local spring frost dates. Even so, weather related surprises can occur.

Butterpeas require plenty of sunshine and a moderately rich soil with a goodly amount of humus. Soil should be loose, a bit on the acid side (pH 5.5-6.5) and have adequate moisture retaining qualities—not soggy, mind you, but not sieve-like either.

Ground must be well prepared (no clods) so that seedlings won't have difficulty breaking through the dirt. If soil is on the heavy side with a tendency to pack after hard rains or form a crust when it begins to dry out, seeds should be planted only about a half inch deep. Also, it may pay to gently loosen the top of the soil if you suspect the seedlings are having trouble pushing through. In loamy soils where this is seldom a problem, 1-1.5 inches deep is recommended for planting. To avoid a lot of thinning of seedlings, I like to space seeds 4-5 inches apart. Mature plants are bushy and will easily fill in the spaces. As a general rule,

butterpeas have a high percentage of germination, but I save a few seeds in case there are any gaps that need to be filled in after seedlings appear.

Like many other vegetables, butterpeas do best if planted in rows for easy access to cultivation and picking. Rows should be a minimum of two feet apart and plants must be kept grass and weed free. Refrain from walking among the rows while plants are wet from dew or showers, as that is one of the ways in which disease organisms are spread among plants. Wet weather fosters anthracnose, bacterial blight, and mildew as well as some others. In our southwestern corner of Arkansas, I have found Dixie butterpeas easy to raise just by following a common sense approach.

If weeds and grass are kept out of the rows until young plants are beginning to spread out and put on blossoms, you will find that the plants will shade the soil sufficiently to keep most unwanted plants from growing. A good practice is to put down at least an inch thick mulch of pine needles and leaves or other organic material when plants are about six inches high. This not only conserves moisture, but it keeps pods from touching the ground and becoming coated with dirt when rains occur.

Whichever method one chooses—mulch or bare ground—it is well to leave off cultivation after the plants come into bloom, as butterpeas, like most limas, have a shallow root system and will drop their immature pods if disturbed after pods are set. The neatly hoed row may look good, but cultivation may also cut down considerably on the harvest.

Every garden has its assortment of pests and ours is no exception. However I have found that lightly sprinkling ten per cent Sevin Dust



*Typical summer scene in our garden. Plants are yielding a good day's picking with lots of blossoms promising more butterpeas to come.*



*Shelled and ready-to-cook speckled butterpeas. Cooking a few of the immature pods in with the shelled butterpeas will enhance flavor.*

along the ground next to the plants will deter sneak attacks by sowbugs, cutworms and other undesirables. There is nothing that raises the ire of this gardener as much as finding young plants done in overnight by pests.

In northern gardens where spring comes much later than in the southern United States, some gardeners use a little trick to trap warmth from the sun and get their lima bean varieties into production early. A ridge of earth piled about four to five inches high and running east and west is prepared the length of row(s) desired and seeds are planted on the south side of the ridge. The sun heats the south side, seeds germinate sooner and the young plants are protected from the cold winds of the north and west that would otherwise keep the ground chilled for a longer period of time, (Who is craftier and more inventive than an avid gardener!)

Some folks like to bring seeds into fast germination by soaking them overnight, but I believe soaking has some serious drawbacks to it. It is easy to oversoak, particularly if one loses track of time. Too much soaking of any of the lima seeds will cause them to sprout making handling a

tedious process as the emerging sprout (root) is easily broken off. Also, if there is an unexpected change for the worse in the weather, here are all of these sprouting seeds to be dealt with. I believe it's more practical to plant seeds directly in the ground at the proper time and let nature take its course.

Butterpeas require 75 - 80 days from planting to first harvest and the prime time for picking them is when the pods have filled out to a plump size and the butterpeas come loose easily when the pod is opened. If the pod does not open readily when pressed firmly along the edges, it should remain on the plant a few days longer. Also, the mature pod will change from a medium green color to a yellow-green or light yellow. If you're undecided about which pods to pick, try opening a few and you'll soon get the hang of it.

Summertime meals are often quite simple when fresh vegetables are available from the garden. One of our favorite meals is planned around fresh butterpeas with hot corncakes (see recipes). Add a plate of sliced tomatoes and your favorite summertime beverage and you will not only have a nutritious meal but one that's

easy and quick to prepare. Persons with a tendency toward anemia will especially benefit from eating butterpeas, as they are high in iron, protein, potassium and B-vitamins.

To give soil a boost, dig the plants under to decay after the last of the crop has been gathered. These plants will return nutrients to the soil as they came from a family of plants noted for being soil builders.

An abundance of butterpeas is like an oversupply of anything else, as we can't eat it all when it's harvested. Like the industrious ant, we like to tuck favorite things away for winter especially if it's simple to do. Butterpeas are very easy to freeze. Just take freshly shelled and washed butterpeas, put them in a French-fry container (one with holes that won't allow butterpeas to escape) and submerge them in a pot of boiling water for 2 1/2 minutes. Drain and move the container to a pan of ice-cold water and chill for about three to four minutes. Drain well, put in freezer bags, cover with the chilling water and store in freezer. Be sure that bags have tight seals to prevent leakage. We stack our bags on their sides with cardboard between layers until contents are frozen. Then we remove the cardboard to use again.

When winter conditions make life on the outside miserable, mighty comforting to have some of last summer's bounty to savor. Let the winter winds howl! Inside, it's summer.

#### **Some Seed Sources:**

Geo. W. Park Seed Co  
1 Parkton Ave.  
Greenwood, SC 29647-0001

R. H. Shurnway's  
P.O. Box 1  
Graniteville, SC 29829

Vermont Bean Seed Co.  
Garden Lane  
Fair Haven, VT 05743

## Butterpeas

3 - 4 strips of cured, sliced bacon  
1 quart shelled and washed  
butterpeas  
1 medium onion, coarsely chopped  
1 medium bell pepper, coarsely  
chopped  
1/2 teaspoon salt (optional)  
1/8 teaspoon black OR cayenne  
pepper

Fry bacon until done but not crisp. Save drippings and cut bacon into small pieces. Put butterpeas in a saucepan with enough water to cover them well. Add rest of ingredients plus about 3 tablespoons of the bacon drippings. Cover saucepan, bring

contents to a boil and then simmer about 20 minutes or until butterpeas are tender. Serves 3 to 4 persons depending on other side dishes.

## Butterpea corncakes

1/2 cup yellow cornmeal  
1/4 cup unbleached flour  
1/4 cup whole wheat flour  
2 teaspoons baking powder  
1/8 teaspoon garlic powder  
(optional)  
1/2 teaspoon salt (optional)  
1 egg, lightly beaten  
1 tablespoon cooking oil  
1/2 cup milk

Sift dry ingredients together in mixing bowl. Stir in egg, cooking oil and milk. Mixture should be of a consistency to drop by table-spoonfuls into skillet for cooking. (If you think mixture is too thick put in a bit more milk, but be careful not to thin it too much). Use a nonstick skillet or heavy iron one with about 1/8 inch good quality cooking oil in it. (Add more oil when needed.) Heat until oil slightly bubbles and drop cornmeal mixture in by spoonfuls leaving enough space between corncakes to be able to turn them over easily, as they will spread out some as they begin to cook. About two minutes on each side should be sufficient to cook corncakes, depending on their thickness. Serves 3 or 4 persons. Δ

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## Elephant garlic as a cash crop

By Charles O'Sullivan

When a person decides to grow a cash crop, a number of considerations must be a part of the decision.

A product which is inherently pest free not only lends itself to being grown organically but also eliminates the need to buy pesticides. People are naturally attracted to products grown without chemicals. Elephant garlic attracts no pests at all. I have never had a problem with pests eating the bulb in the ground or the vegetation. As a matter of fact, gardeners often plant garlic around the perimeter of their gardens to discourage pests.

High recognition in the market place is a real plus. In other words, it makes little sense to put all the effort into growing a product only to be forced to educate your buyers to the value of your product. The object is to turn the product into money not mini seminars. Elephant garlic is a part of the family of plants which is the third most purchased seasoning in America. Salt is first, pepper is second and garlic is third. According to the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization, some five billion pounds are consumed annually around the world.

Competition is a very important consideration. It doesn't make a lot of sense to use your limited space and time to grow a crop which others are also growing in mass quantity. Corn, for example, sells for about 10 cents per ear. If you grow 10,000 stalks and end up with 9,000 ears for sale, at 10

cents a piece, you will earn \$900. It sure is hard to get excited about \$900. But to the farmer who produces several hundred thousand, the numbers work. Don't compete with large growers! Elephant garlic solves this problem. In this article you will learn how to turn 1/4 acre into a cash flow of as much as \$35,000 per year and I'm not kidding!

In America, commercially grown garlic is by far the leader in pounds produced and its production has quadrupled in the last 25 years.



*After eight weeks these garlic plants are well on their way.*

California leads all states producing some 90% of all American grown garlic. Garlic production is concentrated in the area of Gilroy, California which is about 70 miles southeast of San Francisco. According to the California Agricultural Statistician, in 1995, 31,000 acres produced 5,115,000 pounds with a value of \$179,834,000. Pretty impressive figures but do you want to compete with companies that plant 31,000 acres? I don't.

Commercial garlic, "Silverskin French" and "Serpentine," is different from elephant garlic in a number of ways. One is that it produces multiple bulbs—perfect for the commercial

grower who is after large numbers and tons of product. The plant produces fertile seeds which enables the grower to sell every last plant. It lends itself to the use of large machinery both for planting and harvesting thereby keeping the cost of labor to a minimum.

Elephant garlic does not produce multiple bulbs. One clove will produce one bulb. Each bulb will consist of four to six cloves, each of which can be replanted. Elephant garlic does not produce fertile seeds. It does produce a center stalk with a rather pretty flower and cluster of seeds but none of the seeds is of any value because they're sterile.

Elephant garlic is almost always planted and harvested by hand. Some growers of elephant garlic harvest with potato pickers but for the most part each plant is removed from the ground one at a time. These factors are not attractive to the large commercial growers in California so they don't grow elephant garlic.

Underproduction is another consideration. There is a reason why elephant garlic retails for \$6.00 per pound while the small, commercially grown, hard-to-peel garlic cloves sell for half that price. Quite simply, there is not enough elephant garlic to go around. It is under produced. When demand exceeds supply, the price goes up. Why is it under produced? To put it in a nutshell, it takes several years for an individual to produce enough seed stock to enable him/her to sell any. (I'll explain that a little later.) We live in an era of instant gratification and most people are not



willing to dedicate their time to a project which, although very fruitful, has a reward which is several years away. We want it **now!**

Elephant garlic can be grown in any climate where a person presently has an outside garden. The person who sold my original seed stock to me lives in Illinois where winters can be rather nasty. He grew elephant garlic quite successfully for many years. I am located in central Florida where it rarely drops below freezing and am having incredible success with the plant. So, I think it is safe to say that if you live anywhere between Illinois and Florida, your climate will work.

Elephant garlic is much smoother tasting than either commercially grown or specialty garlic and, therefore, lends itself to being consumed as a food warmed slightly or as a spice. The cloves are quite large and some can weigh as much as four ounces. I offer these for sale as "Giants." Most cloves weigh between 1 and 2 1/2 ounces. This size should be your primary seed stock. Other cloves are somewhat small. I sell them at a discounted price through local health food stores in half-pint clamshell containers. Health food stores love 'em. I have received quite a few sales for large clove seed stock from customers who bought my small cloves locally and wanted to grow their own.



*Small cloves can be sold to health food stores in this clamshell container which holds six ounces. The cost of creating the label—artwork and set up—is about \$400. The labels and containers cost about three cents each, and I wholesale them for \$1.60.*



*Elephant garlic cloves come in several sizes, (left to right.) A perfect bulb weighs about 8 ounces (center top.) A "giant" clove can weigh 4 ounces, (center bottom.) Grade "A" cloves weigh 1 1/4 oz. and are prime seed stock. Grade "B" cloves are also terrific growers. Grade "C" cloves are sold through retail stores in clamshell containers. (Far right) Hard shell "corms" grow on the outside of the large bulbs and can become a large bulb after 2 growing seasons.*

How to get started. Let me preface the following explanation with a couple of thoughts. This is not a phony multi-level marketing scam, nor is it a get rich quick deal that doesn't work. This is honest, hard work for the honest, hard worker producing a real product with real value. Depending on the amount of money you have to purchase seed stock, this project will take you from three to five years before you can sell anything. So, if you are not the type of person who can dedicate him/herself to a long term project, don't even start.

I am in my fourth year growing elephant garlic and expect to clear \$35,000 selling product this year. Last year, I cleared about \$8,500 and bought enough new seed stock to completely fill my area measuring 110' by 137'. I have 27 three foot rows each of which has about 4,000 plants growing. I started out with less than \$200 invested.

Let's say a person started with 100 cloves. Each clove will grow for 8 to 10 months (depending on the length of your winter.) It will then split into four to six cloves each of which is a genetic duplication of the mother and can be replanted. The 100 cloves will have become 500. Don't sell any. Replant for a second season and the

500 cloves will become 500 bulbs each of which will have four to six cloves. You now own 2,500 cloves. Don't sell any. Repeat the process for a third year and you will possess 2,500 bulbs (12,500 cloves) and now you can start to sell. As long as you retain your seed stock of 2,500 cloves, you can sell 10,000 cloves and never go out of business. I sell my large cloves for 50 to 60 cents each. With this as a guideline, your 10,000 cloves are worth about \$5,500. If you want to become a larger grower, put off selling for one more year and you will have in excess of \$25,000 worth of elephant garlic available for sale. But it will take you four years. If you have more money to invest in seed stock, you can cut the number of years down. By starting with 500 cloves, you will save one year.

Interested? I have a 100-page manual available which explains everything. I also have seed stock available which you can use to start this fall. Plant in September and harvest in May. I also have eight pages of related information which I will be pleased to send to you at no charge. A SASE with one 32 cent stamp affixed would be appreciated. Send it to Charles O'Sullivan, PO Box 1525, Polk City, FL 33868. Δ

## Here's how one man made the transition from city to country

By Gene Sheley

Dave and Colleen Reber have made a successful transition from city life to backwoods living, but it required several years and took a measure of determination, a healthy dose of self-confidence, and some pure luck.

Their hidden rustic home along the Oregon border is a long way from the confines of California's Fresno and Santa Cruz Counties, and his career choices from electric utility foreman to fishing guide to 21st century satellite television technician are equally distant from one another.

Reber operates Dave's Satellite Television Service out of his home, and his years of work are evident by the number of large dishes that bring a big variety of clear television programming to homes that otherwise would depend on archaic antennas delivering bleary pictures.

A native of Nebraska, Reber learned the basics of electrical utility work at the end of his stint with the U.S. Marine Corps in Vietnam.

He worked for Pacific Gas & Electric, one of California's major electric utility franchises and "was making good money as a foreman with a good future and good retirement."

However, the job created an unstable home life with frequent transfers to places he didn't necessarily want to go.

"I was getting tired of being shifted around. I would be cutting the lawn at 4:30 in the afternoon and the company would tell me I was being transferred the next day," said Reber.

His chance to escape from the city and the arbitrary policies of the power firm came in 1979 when he and his parents purchased a grocery and gen-

eral store in the forested area shared by Oregon and California, backwoods location mostly administered by the U.S. Forest Service.

His initial function was as the store-connected fishing guide in an area that once was a major center for steelhead and salmon along with trout.

"I didn't know anything about being a fishing guide, but I can do anything I want to do when I set my mind to it," said Reber.

The Rebers lived in an 11-foot camper located behind the store. They shared the accommodations with two

maintaining our input and takeout accesses. We fish guides were doing most of the maintenance and I wasn't about to share with the forest service. So I stopped the fish guide business."

The couple shared the duties of operating the store complex, which initially included the federally-operated post office that serves the area.

Colleen qualified as a postal clerk and a year later became postmaster.

Now with an assured family income, Reber decided he wanted to do something else. "I was just bored with the store," he said, and eventually sold the business.

While operating the store, the Rebers bought their secluded rustic home that is found only with explicit



*It was a long way around for Dave Reber to reach a goal of having a good business in an area where he preferred to live. Now he operates a high-tech satellite television business from his secluded home along the California-Oregon border.*

kids and two dogs but later, after some alterations to a second story area over the store, they moved into that space.

The responsibilities for the entire business became his with the unexpected death of his mother.

After three years as a fish guide, a clash with the U.S. Forest Service ended that enterprise.

"The forest service wanted to be my business partner by charging three percent of the gross for using 'their' river. The river belongs to everyone but the fee was supposed to go for

directions and with the help of individuals familiar with the area.

Although the family had an assured income from Colleen's federal job, Dave Reber isn't one to sit around. He soon found employment with Dale Stolte, a nearby resident of the remote wooded area who had been in on the ground floor when satellite television receiving dishes initially became operationally practical.

Stolte operated under the name of D&D Television Satellite Service.

Dave wasn't part of the D&D name, but spent so much time with the busi-



*A knack for electronics and a lot of self-confidence led Dave Reber to eventually purchase a former employer's big dish television satellite business. Now Reber is ready for the coming digital transmission to help usher the remote forest residents into the 21st century.*

ness that most assumed the name came from Dale and Dave.

"I just tagged along at first," said Reber, "but by the end of the first year there wasn't anything I couldn't do in the satellite dish business. I have a knack for things electronic. I was shown only once how to fix the refrigeration equipment in the store and after that I did all the repairs.

"After about the first year, I asked Dale if I could buy him out and he kept saying 'next year.' I was about to start my own business when Dale had a stroke and agreed to sell me the business."

That "business" consists of sales of satellite equipment and maintenance, repair and parts replacement of existing units that proliferate throughout the Klamath River area.

Competition increased in the past couple of years as Direct Digital Satellite (DDS) with its smaller and less expensive receiving systems began to enter the market.

Reber is ready for the digital changeover, but right now notes that the clearer and more realistic image available in "digital" television of any kind still is some months away.

"I have always liked to take things apart and put them back together just to see how they work. I'm inquisitive about things that do something—that work.

For the individual dreaming of escaping the traffic and other big city problems, Reber said, "Just do it. I had a good paying job and took a big chance in leaving it. Now I can sit on my porch, with no light pollution, and see lights of Medford, Oregon 50 miles away. If you want to do it, just do it." Δ

### The Fan

The fan has called again  
And I'm getting tired of her.  
She bought a copy of my book with my picture on the cover.  
She yells at me over the phone she's angry  
Because I don't call  
Because one of my recent poems is about her  
Because I've written about other women  
Or, in this case, because I referred to her as  
The fan.

John Silveira  
Ojai, CA

# Make a fun stick whistle

By Charles Sanders

Out here in the sticks, that is exactly what we use to make a neat toy whistle. Every spring when the sap starts flowing, the kids remember that it is time to make whistles and we journey out to get the proper wood. In addition to getting "whistle-makins," the boys also receive some practical lessons in tree identification.

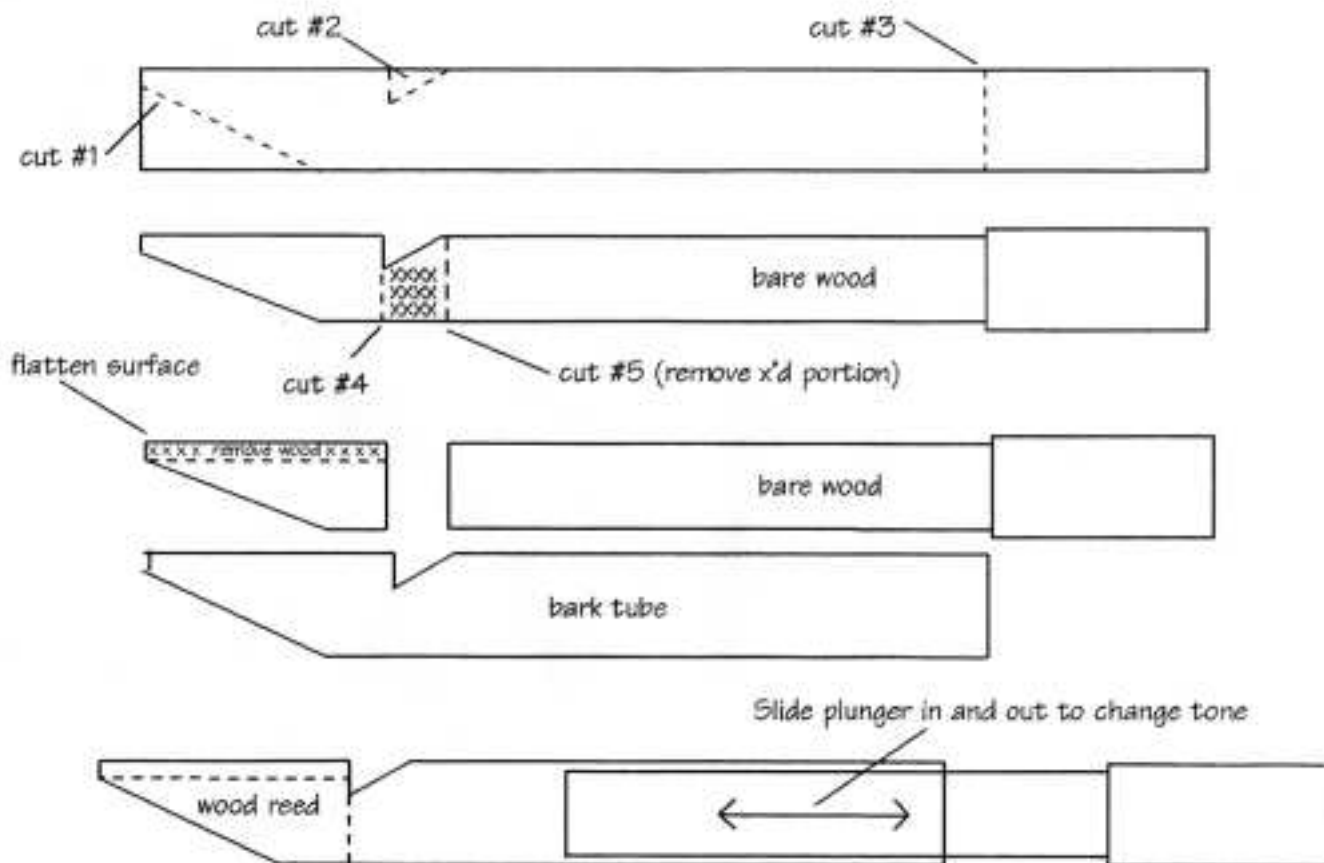
To make your own whistle, you will need to select a sprout or sapling from one of the smooth barked species of

trees. In my area, tulip poplar and hickory are popular choices for making the little noise makers. In some areas, I believe that alder or willow is used. Basically, any species which can be made to slip easily from the bark will work. The important thing is to cut the wood in the spring when the sap is running.

Select a smooth section of young live wood about one-half inch or so in diameter and about six inches in length. I have made whistles up to nearly an inch, but the wood is much more difficult to work with. Try to

pick the straightest piece you can find with no bud scars or knots. If you must select wood with scars or knots, cut the stick so that the scars and knots are where the whistle notch will be located, or on the handle.

Now we're ready to start cutting. First, cut the angle at what will be the reed and mouthpiece. Start at a point about 3/4-inches back from the end and cut up towards the opposite side leaving about 1/8-inch of flat surface on the end. Cut #2 is a notch cut into the stick as shown. Make the cut about 1/4 to 1/3 as deep as the diameter of the stick. Be sure to make a straight cut facing the mouthpiece end of the stick. Cut #3 is just a bit different. To make this cut, score through the bark



Use a green stick cut in spring when the sap is running. Make the cuts and tap the bark with the knife handle or small hammer until you can slip the bark from the stick. Cut the reed as shown. Clean up the end of the plunger. Re-insert the plunger and give it a blow!



*Four completed hickory whistles*

all the way around the stick cutting completely through the bark but just barely into the wood.

Now, with the smooth side of the handle of your pocketknife or a small hammer, commence to wrap the bark of the stick around the portion where you have cut the notches. Tap the bark lightly but firmly, not hard enough to split the bark. What you are doing here is loosening the bark from the woody stem inside. Take your time and tap the wood all over the stick above the line which you scored around the stick's diameter.

Now, firmly wrap your hand around the loosened bark and grasp the other end of the stick with your other hand. Gently, but firmly twist the bark until it frees from the wood. If it hangs on a bit too much, just rap on it again until you are able to free it. Once the bark is loosened, slide the woody stem out of the bark.

Next, flatten the wood at what will become the reed. This is much easier to do while the piece is still attached to the "handle." Basically, you are flattening the "reed" in order to allow air to pass over it (remove the wood marked with the x's in the diagram.)

Now, make cut #4. Doing this will free the end of the woody stem from the rest. You will end up with a small wooden plug or reed. Now shorten the

plunger as shown and finish by whittling off the end to smooth it up.

All that is left is to insert the "reed" into the mouthpiece of the whistle as shown. Slide the plunger into the other end of the whistle and you are ready to go.

Now start piping! Slide the plunger in and out of the bark tube to vary the pitch of the tones produced. As a child, we would apply a coating of shortening to the wood stem to keep the plunger operating smoothly. The whistle will last for many days, but after a day or so you may notice the bark tube drying out and reducing the space over the reed. This will restrict the airflow over the reed and affect your whistling. To rejuvenate the bark tube and prolong the life of the whistle, just remove the plunger and soak the bark tube in a saucer of water overnight. In the morning the whistle will be as good as new.

This little whistle is simple and fun to make. Experiment with the length and diameter of wood that you use. You can amaze small children with your skill and knowhow the first few times you make these simple rustic, music makers! After a few years though, they will realize just how easy they are to reproduce and will begin to make their own. Δ

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## Self-publishing can be profitable but stay clear of vanity presses

By Robert L. Williams

Every would-be writer in the nation has seen the ads, the brochures, and the come-ons that promise wealth, fame, national recognition and prestige, and adoring multitudes. And across the country thousands of these aspiring writers leap into the abyss and find not wealth and fame, but debts and despair. The ads are all similar. You write your best-selling (in your dreams) novel, and the publisher promises you great success. You sign a contract, pay the money, and get a few copies of the book. In most cases, that's it.

Many times if you submit the book on speculation, the publisher will call you and promise the moon, but he must have an immediate answer. Give him one: No. Here's the deal: He will say that because you are a newcomer writer, you must show that you have at least as much faith in your book as the publisher has. You can show that faith by paying "half the cost" of publishing (which is usually *all* of the cost, plus).

The publisher will then edit your book, design a cover, print it, and send review copies to major newspapers throughout the nation. They will assign you a personal publicist to set up press conferences, talk show appearances, and book store autograph sessions. They even promise to pay for all of your plane flights, meals, and accommodations in top-flight hotels. Royalty rates are higher than you dreamed possible. But 50% of zero is still zero.

I have a friend who, despite my advice, insisted on submitting her book to a vanity press. She received a contract which read in part,

**"Author agrees to supply a copy of the manuscript in word perfect on three and one half inch floppy disk, perfreably, if this is not feasible we will except two cleanly typed copies of the manuscript."**

Errors in the previous sentence are the exact wording from the contract. You can see how professional the publisher is.

The author was asked to pay \$12,000 as her half of the costs of printing, and she would get 25 copies of the book, plus royalties. The author would receive, for her \$12,000, a few copies of the book and little else. Vanity books are seldom reviewed by major media.

The type of operation described above is what is known as *vanity* or *subsidy publishing*. While there are some reliable subsidy houses in the country, most operate on the premise that there is a sucker born not every minute but every second, and it is their duty to fleece them. The typical customer will be lucky if he or she sells 500 copies of the book.

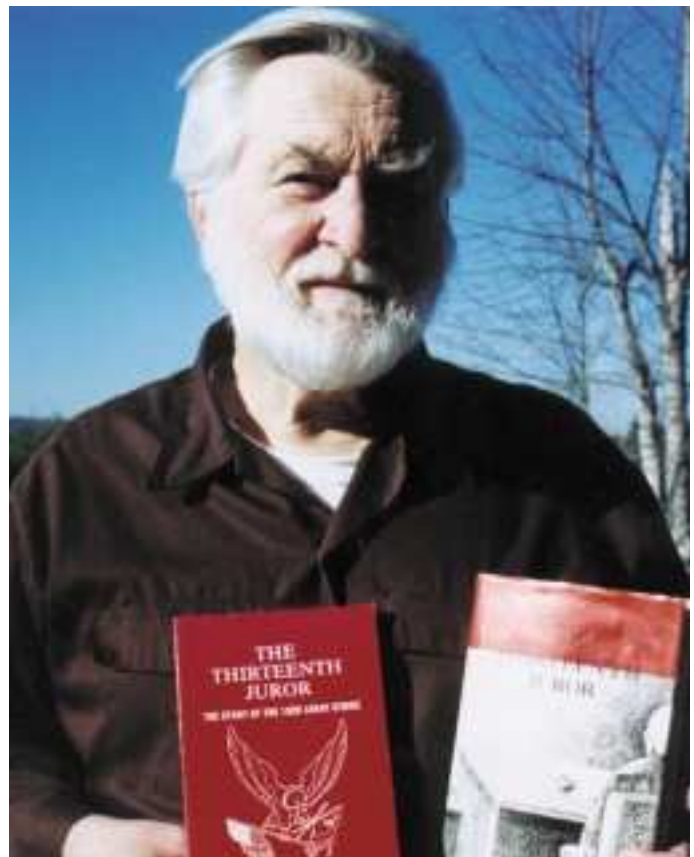
The woman who asked my advice on the book contract

would have had to take out a second mortgage on her house in order to pay for having the book published.

### Three ways to publish

Now let's get down to hard facts. There are basically three intelligent ways to have a book published. The first is to be good enough or lucky enough to get a contract with a **trade book publisher** who will pay you an advance against royalties. You do not pay him one cent. He pays you. The advance may range anywhere from \$100 up to \$40,000 or more.

Your royalty base will range from 5% up to 15 or even 20% on wholesale (sometimes retail) book sales. If your book sells for \$22, you may receive as high as \$3.30 per book. You may also receive as low as \$2.10 or perhaps even lower. But you must realize that the publisher has paid



The author with hard-cover and soft-cover copies of his self-published book *The Thirteenth Juror*



*Newspapers bought articles about the book and provided not only cash but superb free advertising. These are samples of articles that appeared in area newspapers.*

thousands to get your book on the market and is entitled to an appropriate share.

It can be very difficult to get a contract with a large company. Some of these companies receive thousands of manuscripts in a year and will publish only a small percentage of them. Some will not even read manuscripts, except from agents.

A second way to publish is via the **work-for-hire contract**, in which the other party hires you at a specific fee to write a book. A few trade book publishers will also offer work-for-hire contracts in which they will pay you \$5,000 or so (sometimes much more) to write a book for them. The money usually is paid one-half upon signing the contract and one-half when an acceptable manuscript has been delivered.

A third way, and this is the one I recommend for writers who, for whatever reasons, want to have complete control over their work, is **self-publishing**, which is not to be confused with subsidy or vanity publishing.

You are the author, editor, printer, promoter, and the sales staff. You contact a printer, select the type style you want, pick out paper grade, choose cover materials and design, and you pay for every tiny item along the way.

In my years as a writer, I have published with large trade companies (ranging from McGraw-Hill to Berkley to Loompanics), and I have done work-for-hire books for large companies. I have also self-published when I knew I had a sure thing working for me.

Can you make money by self-publishing? Not only can you make money, you can make a great deal of money. There are some self-published writers who earn \$50,000 a year or more on the books they issue themselves. There are many others who earn \$5,000 to \$10,000, just as there are still others who lose money.

### **Who should self-publish?**

The first question is: Who should self-publish? The answer is, anyone who:

- has an appealing or important work that should be in print
- can afford to pay the costs
- can market the book successfully

How do you decide whether a book should be printed? First of all, you **analyze the market**. You do homework that should tell you whether the book will pay for itself and pay you for your efforts. Let me give you an example of how I self-published one book.



*These are samples of vanity books, a trade book, and a self-published book. Picking the self-published book would be very difficult, even for an editor.*



## *A Backwoods Home Anthology*

When I wrote *The Thirteenth Juror* (the story of the 1929 Loray Strike), I had three contracts offered to me by trade publishers. For various reasons, I did not like any of the contracts and decided to market the book myself.

I visited a printer who told me that he'd print the book for \$5 per copy if I ordered 500 copies. My total bill would be \$2,500. If I printed 1000 books, the cost per book would be \$3.50, so my total cost would be \$3,500. If I printed 2,000 books, each book would cost me \$2.25, and my total cost would be \$4,500.

I did my market research and learned that I could expect to sell at least 400 books immediately. Figure it out: 400 books at \$13.95 each equals \$5,580. So I was into the profit side of the ledger instantly.

When the book was printed, I sold enough books the first week to pay the total cost of printing. This meant that, apart from a few minor expenses, every book I sold after that would return a 100% profit.

I am telling you what I did, because this is what you can do. Each book and each author will differ, naturally, but there will be inevitable similarities.

### **Marketing**

First, I contacted the local newspaper and offered to write them an article which actually represented a few pages from my book. They paid me \$50 for the article. And the paper later asked me to write my own story about my book. I did, and I was not only paid for writing the story but received great free publicity.

Other newspapers responded in kind. I sold articles to a dozen papers and at the same time received payment and free advertising. I contacted radio stations, and more than a dozen area stations asked

me to come to the station for a call-in talk show appearance. The same was true of television stations. After each appearance, there was a rash of orders for the book.

I had some mailers prepared, and I sent leaflets or flyers to every library, nationally and locally. The list included public and private libraries as well as high school, junior high school, college, and university libraries. The first week, I sold books to the North Carolina State College Library in Raleigh, to the UCLA Law School Library in Los Angeles, and to the University of Chicago Law School. Along the way, I sold books to libraries in nearly every state in the Union and in several foreign countries.

Civic clubs learned about the book, and I spoke regularly to breakfast, lunch, and evening groups. I could expect to sell no fewer than 20 books at each gathering, and I often left with \$300 plus a speaker's fee in my pocket.

I earned \$20,000 in fees for articles about the area and times described in the book, in addition to book sales. I still sell articles about the book, which

has sold out two printings and is still in demand. Orders arrive regularly.

Best of all, perhaps, is that one of the leading television networks asked me to write a mini-series script for consideration. I had the script nearly completed when a tornado destroyed our house, and to date I have not had time to re-write the script.

### **Important questions**

Before you rush out and have your own book printed, you must ask several questions and make several decisions. Can you afford to pull \$5,000 or so from your pocket or bank account without causing your family financial problems? Is the printer willing to allow you time to sell a few books before he demands final payment?

Do you have a ready and available market? Is the book a non-perishable commodity, or will it have a limited shelf life? Is it a seasonal or an all-year book? Do you have contacts at radio and television stations, at newspapers, and at schools, churches, and civic clubs? Do you have the spare time to devote to promoting and marketing the book? Are there ancillary income opportunities?



*Signatures (or sections of books) are done in a variety of ways. Here is how one signature looks.*

## Production details

If your responses suggest moving ahead, get the book written. Check and re-check it for grammar and punctuation and factual accuracy. The printer will not be responsible for these matters.

When you visit the printer, ask if you can typeset the book on your own computer. If so, you can save \$1,000 or more, depending upon the size of the book. A typesetter will typically charge more than \$2 per page, and if you can do it yourself, the money stays in your pocket. You can buy a splendid computer, complete with Windows and WordPerfect installed, for less than \$1000. You can actually pay for the computer with money saved on typesetting.

Take with you to the printer a book that has a paper grade, a format, and a general appearance that you like. Ask the printer if he can produce a book like the one you brought.

To save extra money, produce a perfect-bound softcover book rather than a hardback. You can save hundreds of dollars with the four-color softbound format. If the printer wants to sell you a higher grade of paper than you need, ask him for a slightly lower grade that will have a much lower price and will not take away from the overall quality of the book.

Try to have as much of the book done "under one roof" as you can. The more elements you must job out, the more it will cost you. The jobber must make his profit, and the printer must be paid for his work in getting the book to the jobber. Simplify and save time and money and reduce the chance of damage or loss of quality.

In planning your book, you must think in terms of *signatures*. When you open a book wide and look at the tiny groups of bound pages, each of these sections is a signature. Signatures can come in several numbers of pages, but 16 is a common figure. This means that your book will be put together in 16-page sections, so

the number of pages in your book will ideally be divisible by 16. A 320-page book will have 20 signatures. A 192-page book will have 12 signatures. Pay attention to the signatures, because you may wind up with wasted pages that you paid for. You can ask if the printer can work with other types of signatures, such as 8 or 12 pages.

## What's the right price?

Now think of the price you intend to put on the book. A rule of thumb for trade books is that a book should sell for five times its printing price. But if your book costs you \$5 per copy, it's doubtful that you can sell it for \$25 per copy. You may have to content yourself with selling for twice the printing cost.

One important matter is the number of give-aways needed. You must give free copies to reviewers, whether they review the book or not. You cannot expect someone to buy your book in order to give you free advertising.

You will also realize that your friends and family members will expect you to give them free copies. Keep in mind that if you give away one copy to a friend, it is difficult to say no to other friends. If these people ask you for a complimentary copy, remind them that they would never ask a grocer for a complimentary pound of steak or a hardware store for a complimentary hammer or saw.

When people complain about the high cost of the book, agree with them, then point out that the book costs about the same as a meal at a fast-food restaurant or a package of underwear. But the book is a lifetime possession, not a temporary purchase.

Keep prices, even discount prices, constant. If one dealer learns that another dealer gets the books cheaper, he'll want to know why you are robbing him.

When people ask if the book is in the local bookstores, tell them that you prefer to sell personally rather than deal with bookstores. By selling

direct, you can autograph the copies for customers (*and keep all the profits*). Bookstores expect a 35-40% discount. If the book costs you \$5 and you retail it for \$12, and if you give a 40% discount to a store, you are making a \$2.20 profit while the store makes a \$4.80 profit, when all they are doing is taking the money across the counter.

## Final tips

Always keep copies of the book with you when you travel. You often meet people who want to buy a copy, and if you don't sell it at that moment, you may never sell it. When the customer is buying, that's the time to sell. Take them with you on vacation, to work, or when you go shopping.

Don't push buyers: you come across as begging. Show that you are interested but not desperate. When you speak at meetings, have someone trustworthy go with you to handle the cash while you sign books and exchange small talk with buyers. Give customer discounts on purchases of five books or more at a time. Many people will spend more money if they think they are getting a bargain. Trade books for services or products. A \$12 book ought to be worth \$12 in trade in a business deal.

Finally, don't apologize for having self-published a book. I have written 30 books, and some of the largest publishers in the nation have published them. But I will self-publish again the moment I am certain that the book I want to write and print is a good business item. You will be surprised how many people will regard you with new respect, once they learn that you are a published writer. And you may well be surprised at just how much money you can make. Δ

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## A determined Rosie Bley escaped the city

*By Gene Sheley*

**R**osie Bley's self-reliance and confidence has served her well all her life, permitting her to live in one of the most remote areas of California and to meet the challenges that the lifestyle unexpectedly thrust in her way.

Bley is a businesswoman in the tiny Klamath River community of Happy Camp, about halfway between no place and nowhere, in the forests along the border of California and Oregon.

In March, 1986, she left southern California for a trip north, anywhere north just to get away from the congestion and complexities in the area where more than two-thirds of California's 30 million people live. By

chance, she drove down the Klamath River and "I immediately knew this is where I wanted to live." Rosie returned to southern California, sold her home, and bought a place in Seiad (S[eye] add), which consists of a few homes, a store, and a firehouse.

The Klamath River area is nearly all Klamath National Forest land with a small percentage of private holdings, mostly old patented gold mining claims that were deeded before the U.S. Forest Service was created.

Among the pine, fir, cedar, madrone, and oak, she lived for four years until she met and married Robert Bley in 1990, and made their home in Happy Camp, a small town 18 miles farther west. Her husband was a career timber worker, employed in an industry that collapsed in 1993 with the federally-

ordered reduction in timber harvest. Misfortune struck after Rosie's mother was diagnosed with cancer and was brought to the river country for her final days.

Her mother wanted a computer, expressing interest in learning to operate it before she succumbed to the disease. Rosie did as her mother wished but Rosie, who had no computer experience, had to learn to run the device in order to show her mother its operating nature. While her mother learned only the rudiments before her death, Rosie continued to teach herself all the intricacies of the electronic device, integrating her previous layout and design experience from a drafting table into a computerized environment.

Before their marriage, her husband, who had been a resident for more than 35 years, had acquired the property where he had lived as a boy on Indian Creek with the hopes of fixing up the shell of a house someday. But needing a place to live after they married, they bought a home for their new life together.

Two years later, the couple had a son. Then problems arose when Bob was injured and underwent surgery on his neck and hip. Rosie worked at one of the local grocery stores and continued her self-taught computer education while Bob recovered from his surgery. Disability income isn't enough to maintain a household, so Bob looked at careers that might allow him to continue to live in Happy Camp. Since he had a great love for children, the best bet was the elementary or high school.

Because a school teacher education would take him so far away for so long, it was with mixed emotions that Rosie finally told her husband to get on with his training and she would manage somehow. At the age of 38, the former mill worker started his aca-



Rosie Bley



demic education at a community college more than 100 miles away. In the meantime, Rosie had to find gainful employment in a place where employment outside of business ownership is virtually non-existent. For five years she had worked at the local grocery, but after the timber harvest reduction hit, that grocery, one of two in the community, converted its business to a pizza restaurant. Rosie had become adept enough at desktop publishing to go into that business from the Bley home where one of her best customers was her former employer.

Business thrived, at least to the point that she could make a moderate living, and with that, coupled with Bob's retirement money from the mill, they managed to survive. By then, his disability had run out.

When the retirement money ran out, they sold Bob's boyhood property. In 1996, she took an entrepreneurial business class offered by extension in Happy Camp from the same community college previously attended on-campus by her husband. One of the class members was Mike Trombetta, a retired telephone company telecomputer specialist.

Trombetta and his wife, Janice, moved to Happy Camp six years ago but they didn't retire long. Janice worked for a gold mining organization, and Mike taught school as a substitute and did some computer consulting.

Bley and Trombetta found that both had considered a computer supply and general stationery business for Happy Camp, a resource absent in the hurting community. In spite of the economics caused by the mill closure, Rosie's self-confidence, coupled with Mike's own self-assured attitude, convinced them that an office supply store might be economically feasible. The two potential partners traveled to other small economically-hurting timber communities, interviewing business owners about the market potential for everything from pencils to computers.

In June, 1996, just four months after the college course, Office Outfitters opened its doors in a section of the town's only general merchandise store.

Rosie moved her desktop publishing equipment to the new location and Trombetta provided computer consulting. Their business also features office and school supplies, public fax, copy service, and many other necessary goods and services of that nature.

Little more than a year later, Trombetta became involved in a successful funding effort to locate a state-of-the-art computer center in the community, and in late 1997 it became a reality with Trombetta as the director. Because his new responsibilities are full-time, Janice quit her job with the mining business and took over her husband's store functions to work alongside Rosie.

The Bley's still have some moderately difficult economic times but Rosie wouldn't have it any other way.

Bob is in his fourth year of the five-year education process, now attending a university in southern Oregon about 100 miles northeast of Happy Camp. He spends his weekends at the Bley's forested home near Indian Creek. During the week, Rosie "commutes" the mile or so from her creekside home to her own business, dropping her young son off at kindergarten or day care.

It's 75 miles to the nearest town of any size and a million miles from southern California's teeming masses, and it is exactly what Rosie wanted in life. Now she has gotten more than she expected. "We could move back to a bigger area, where my husband could go to school, then teach, and I could make more money. But here I have a vocation that I love, a strong and endearing family life; I live in one of the most beautiful places on earth, in a town where everyone is like family, and soon my husband will be finished with his education and come home to stay. I have been blessed." Δ

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## Supplement your income by raising exotic tortoises

*By Tom Bartoli*

**R**aising exotic tortoises for profit is probably not high on most peoples' list of country money making ventures. Tortoise breeding is, however, a natural for nearly any rural environment and it can be an excellent way to earn extra income without a huge investment in time, money, materials or space.

Tortoise breeding is not for everyone and it will probably not provide enough cash to be your sole source of income. However, once established even a small tortoise colony can easily earn several hundred, even several thousand, dollars per year.

First of all, what is a tortoise? Although there is some disagreement among biologists, a tortoise is generally a dry land turtle. Most are vegetarian and most do not live in or even near water. For the purposes of this article the term tortoise will be used since the vast majority of the most popular, and thus the most profitable, turtles among collectors are tortoises. Although the information in this article is specific to the breeding of tortoises, it is also applicable to turtles in general.

### Getting started

It is important to select a species that is suited to your environment. Notice I

said "a species." It's best to begin with one species. Once you are successful with that species you can add others if you desire.

Tortoises inhabit a variety of climatic regions, but each species tends to have a limited range that is uniform in climate. You do not, for example, find Sonora Desert Tortoises in wet, cold climates like those in the Pacific Northwest. Similarly, you do not find the Red Footed Tortoise, which is native to the tropical regions of South America, in the arid Southwest.

Also, certain species have unusual needs. Some, such as the Leopard Tortoise, do not hibernate. Others, such as the Russian Tortoise, estivate, which means they sleep for days, even weeks, during the summer when it is too hot or dry.

You can alter your environment to some degree to provide suitable habi-



*Leopard tortoise — A medium-sized prolific breeder that does not hibernate*

tat for a specific species. You can create a desert-like landscape for a species that is native to an arid climate, or you might provide a greenhouse or a heated burrow in an area with nights that are too cool for your chosen species.

Food is another consideration. Some species are strict vegetarians that will graze on grasses and plants. Others approach carnivorousness and prefer insects and worms. Still others will eat nearly anything.

Choose carefully. Select a species that is suited to your environment (or to an environment that you can easily create and maintain) and that has eating habits that you can support with minimal effort.

## Legal considerations

Many tortoise species are protected by law and are strictly controlled. Some require a license. Others are forbidden entirely. Some can be kept but cannot be sold or traded for anything of value. To make matters more complicated, there are both federal and state laws to contend with and laws vary from state to state. In Arizona, where we live, snapping turtles are prohibited and will be confiscated immediately by the state's fish and game department. Conversely, many other states do not restrict or control snapping turtles in any way.

Check with the appropriate state and federal authorities in your area before you select a species. At least one member of the nearest tortoise club will probably know exactly who to contact in your area.

## Building the habitat

Your tortoise habitat must be designed carefully. It must be secure, both to prevent escape (turtles are very patient and persistent if they decide they want out) and to keep out unwanted intruders. It must also provide food, shelter, and space.



*Hermann tortoise — A hardy, small, highly-spirited, and very productive breed*

All tortoises use a den, usually a burrow of some sort, as their home. It is best to build the den yourself so that you can control it. The primary consideration here is that the den is large enough, safe from invaders, and designed so that it will not fill with water. The den can be a true burrow dug into the ground, or it can be an above ground house covered with dirt. The den, or dens, must be in an enclosed area (a pen) that provides room for sunning, eating, mating, and egg laying.

Ideally, the pen will emulate the tortoise's natural habitat as closely as possible. A species from the grasslands of Africa would have a large pen with plenty of hardy, nutritious grass, few or even no trees, and lots of sunshine. A pen for a species native to the steppes of Afghanistan would have plenty of rocky mounds dotted with a mixture of grass and low, edible shrubs. When building a habitat, it is important to know and understand the needs of the species you have selected.

## Acquiring animals

Tortoises can be obtained through a number of sources including pet stores, hobbyists, breeders, importers,

and wholesalers. Pet stores are usually not a good place for a breeder to find animals. They are nearly always more expensive than they would be elsewhere, and the staff is seldom very knowledgeable.

Hobbyists, such as those you might meet at the local turtle/tortoise or herpetological club, are frequently a good source of animals. These people truly love the animals they keep. The tortoises you get from a hobbyist are usually well cared for, and you will nearly always know the sex, age, and species. The price is typically reasonable, and you will likely get to see the hobbyist's pen, as well as garner tried and true details on the care and feeding of the animal you are buying.

Other breeders, importers, and wholesalers can also be good sources of animals, but they are usually not good sources for beginners. Breeders tend to get top dollar for their turtles and be strictly business. Importers and wholesalers offer lower prices but you seldom get a choice as to sex, age, or condition of the animals you buy. In fact, wholesalers and importers almost always sell their animals sight unseen via the mail, air cargo, or motor freight.

It does not really matter where you get your animals as long as they are

healthy, the price is acceptable to you, and it is legal.

One other point regarding your breeding stock. Most breeders keep only one or two adult males and as many females as they can afford and care for. One male and three females will produce more offspring than two males and two females for obvious reasons.

## Routine care

Once they have become established in their new home, tortoises require minimal daily care. You should make sure that they have ample food—be it forage or feed that you provide—a supply of fresh water, and that the pen is clean. Inspect the pen itself for possible escape routes. Inspect the burrow for unwanted pests such as rodents and spiders. If your female shows signs of laying, you should look for a nest site.

If you find a nest site with eggs, there are two things you can do: leave the eggs in the nest and let them hatch naturally, or carefully remove the eggs and place them in an incubator.

Leaving the eggs in the ground is obviously less work and any hatchlings that eventually emerge will be fairly hardy with a very good survival rate. Incubating the eggs takes more effort and requires the purchase or construction of an incubator, but you will typically get a higher hatch rate.

Just to be on the safe side, do not use pesticides, herbicides, or solid fertilizers (pellets, granules, spikes, etc) in or near your pens. These chemicals can cause birth defects, reduce fertility rates, weaken the immune system, and even kill your animals.

## Selling

After you have hatched your first clutch you must then decide when and how to sell your tortoises. There are several options.

Hatchlings typically sell for more than adults, but not always. You must

keep in touch with the market, through your contacts at local tortoise clubs, etc, so that you know the current prices. Most breeders sell nearly all of their animals as hatchlings, even when adults are priced higher.

Having decided when you sell, you must decide where and how to sell. You can sell to individuals, through classified advertising or shows, to pet stores, or to wholesalers or other breeders by taking advantage of contacts you have developed.

Selling to individuals typically yields the highest price per animal but can take a great deal of time and effort. Selling directly to pet stores is also very time consuming but yields less money than selling to individuals. Selling to wholesalers and other breeders normally requires the least effort but the price per animal is somewhat lower. The advantage to selling to wholesalers and other breeders is the fact that you can often sell an entire clutch at one time, thereby saving a great deal of time.

## The rewards

Raising exotic tortoises can be quite profitable. Captive bred hatchlings can fetch \$25 to \$250 each or more, depending on the species. That may not sound like much until you consider that some of the larger species regularly lay clutches of 20 to 40 eggs. Consider too that a well cared for mature female can lay up to four clutches a year, though two is more common, and you can see that a yearly income of several thousand dollars is feasible.

In addition to money, there are other rewards as well. Many of the most popular, exotic species are under extreme pressure in the wild. Their habitat is being destroyed at an alarming rate and many are being collected for food and profit at rates which threaten their survival as a species. By raising these animals in captivity and satisfying at least some of the demand, you can both reduce the pressure on

wild populations and help to increase the total number of animals.

## Suggested reading:

**Magazines:** *Reptiles*, P.O. Box 6040, Mission Viejo, CA 92690-9953; *Reptile and Amphibian Magazine*, RD #3, Box 3709-A, Pottsville, PA 17901.

**Books:** Two excellent guides for beginners are Tortoise Trust Guide to Tortoises and Turtles, A.C. Highfield, Carapace Press, c/o The Tortoise Trust, BM Tortoise, London, WC1N 3XX, England; Turtles: Keeping Them and Breeding Them in Captivity, John Coburn, T.F.H. Publications, Inc., One T.F.H. Plaza, Neptune City, NJ 07753.

Two in-depth, comprehensive (and expensive) guides are *Practical Encyclopedia of Keeping and Breeding Tortoises and Fresh Water Turtles*, A.C. Highfield, Carapace Press, c/o The Tortoise Trust, BM Tortoise, London, WC1N 3XX, England; *Encyclopedia of Turtles*, Dr. Peter C.H. Pritchard, T.F.H. Publications, Inc., One T.F.H. Plaza, Neptune City, NJ 07753

An excellent source of animal related books is Zoo Book Sales, P.O. Box 405, Lanesboro, MN 55949-0405. Δ

### An Ozark Wood

*These woods know no time;  
This is a place without time,  
An Ozark forest primeval  
as the past; a place where  
one easily senses the spirit  
of a land conquered by pioneers.  
These Ozark woods untouched  
by progress or human hands  
hold the legacy of the past,  
a priceless leaving in an age  
of space travel and success -  
a simple Ozark wood that once  
was the world.*

Lee Ann Murphy  
Neosho, MO